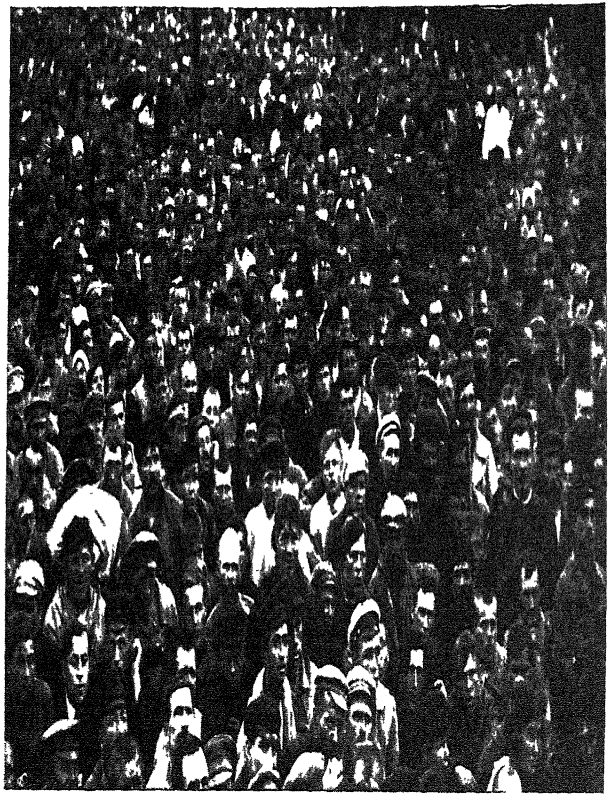
THE MIND AND FACE OF BOLSHEVISM

POSTER

"The red Angel of the Revolution hovers flaming over the Land!"



THE MASS *(Frontispiece)*

affairs of world politics, bothered himself about whether the women workers in some factory or other had actually received the new aprons assigned to them The legend extols Lenin as the ruler of an immense empire, who, after sending a letter to some office under his authority, telephoned immediately himself to ask whether the document had arrived

It was this capacity for being able to think of everything at once, never to let any course of action, once begun, out of his sight again, to put the world out of joint and at the same time worry over the most trifling needs of work-women, it was this capacity that gained Lenin so many adherents. It is on account of this that, after his death, all his apparently uninteresting practical instructions were treated by the Bolsheviks as sacred words, as unforgettable utterances. Thus Lenin's note about the electrification of the villages by means of wind-mills is quoted in Russia like a text from the Gospel. It is remembered at great festivals, and from it strength is drawn for fresh struggles

Finally, Lenin's influence on the multitude is also to be explained by the fact that he succeeded Kerenski, a professed rhetorician, who loved a well-sounding phrase above all else. He appeared exactly at the moment when Russia was tired of high-flown words and longed for terse dryness, for action and deeds. The Russian mind was at that moment involved in one of its most serious crises, and Lenin was then the right man, who proclaimed deeds and practical action as the one salvation, and himself set the example. Had Lenin appeared in a Western European State, his practical principles and civilizing schemes would perhaps have roused little attention, but in Russia, utterly behind the times in modern civilization, this gospel of utilitarianism must have seemed in truth a new religion.

5

But the uniqueness of Lenin's methods and his ultimate success can only be measured if we consider how small and completely isolated his group of adherents still seemed in 1917. Even when Lenin was already the absolute monarch of Russia the Entente Press still regarded him as a " bandit," and a " German spy." It was not till he was already deranged in body and soul, and had withdrawn from public life and was wasting away, a living corpse, in the quiet sanatorium at Gorki, that Europe began slowly to recognize the importance of this extraordinary man. To-day even opponents of his doctrine must number Lenin among the strongest and most remarkable personalities in history. But the greatness of his political work in its entirety can be really understood only if it is

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INTRODUCTION

HITHERTO Bolshevism has almost always been regarded purely as a political problem; to wrest it from this misleading and superficial judgment is the aim of this book. For what is happening in Russia to-day is far too significant and fateful for our age to be handed over for acceptance or rejection to a caste of politicians whose attitude and verdict depend entirely on tactical considerations, and who will emphasize or ignore both its defects and its merits as it suits their interest at the moment.

The problem of Bolshevism extends far beyond the narrow horizon of political sympathies or antipathies. Its acceptance or rejection is the rejection or acceptance of the whole of European culture The claim made for Bolshevism is that it can immediately and without delay realize all the immemorial aims of human endeavour, all those things for which the thinkers of all times have striven, to which martyrs have testified by their example in life and in death—I mean, the redemption and happiness of mankind. Its doctrines offer not the vague hope of consolation in another and better world of the future, but precepts for the immediate and concrete realization of this better world.

Such a colossal claim demands more earnest consideration than is generally accorded to political and social reforms; but it also calls for more serious and conscientious criticism. No body of men has ever before had the audacity to try to " give a practical demonstration " of redemption, that never yet attained vision of the future; and no one who enters upon so bold an undertaking can expect to escape rigorous criticism.

The ordinary methods of objective criticism break down before the vastness of the subject, and it cannot be exhausted by political and economic abstractions. Bolshevism stands for a radical change of the whole of human life in all its fundamental aims and interests, in every one of its manifestations. But you cannot get to the heart of reality by impersonal theories, a dry array of facts, and an uncritical reproduction of expressions of opinion, *pro* and *con*. Only by experience can you obtain a truthful picture of men and their actions,

words and ideas, and only a concrete representation of what has been experienced can communicate to others a true picture of living reality.

By objectivity, I mean a sincere way of looking at things, a lack of bias in personal impressions, an impartial attitude to what is seen and heard, so that what is really great will be recognized as great even when it alienates and wounds, and what is mere sham and pretentiousness is ridiculed, however emotional its appeal. To be objective is not to abstain from any critical estimate, but rather to approach life without prejudice and to form a just judgment on it.

In any attempt to give a vivid and faithful picture of present-day Russia, it is necessary to invoke the aid of photography, an important ally. Its unerring reliability serves as documentary support to the text; it preserves for all time the whole world of Bolshevism: the daily life of the period, its great festivals, its works of art, and its men and women. Much of what is fixed on the plates is unique and can never happen again; in all its extraordinariness it is already a part of history. In this sense, many of the illustrations in this book can be regarded as priceless historical documents.

Where necessary to illustrate personal experience, I have quoted from the speeches, writings, and other utterances of the friends and foes of Bolshevism; but only persons have been unreservedly allowed to speak whose statements had been verified by ocular evidence. On the other hand, the empty talk of phrase makers has been ruthlessly exposed.

The limits of objective criticism are laid down automatically by the nature of every historical process; in the criticism of Bolshevism, however, these restrictions are even more clearly felt. We are dealing here with a revolution which maintains that with it and through it the old world ceases and a new humanity begins. But the dominance of this system, the effects of which will extend to the most distant future, will have lasted barely ten years when this book is published.

Can any fair estimate be made, after such a brief experience, of a principle whose consequences may endure for thousands of years? Yes and no: it is true that it is not at present possible to draw a final picture of the nature and prospects of Bolshevism, since many beginnings will be dropped and much that is new will be added. Nevertheless, it is already possible to give expression to much that is important regarding the mind and face of Bolshevism, for a section of a curve often permits us to draw weighty conclusions about its further course.

While this book, therefore, does not presume to give a final verdict on events in Russia, it does, by the manner of its treatment, claim to save Bolshevism from a narrow, utilitarian, political

criticism, and to show it in its true light as a momentous problem of civilization as a whole.

I have to express my very grateful thanks to all the Russian artists, politicians, and scholars who so unselfishly aided me in my work in Russia I must also acknowledge that the authorities put no check on my activities, although my attitude was entirely unbiassed, open, and critical. Finally, special thanks are due to my friend, Percy Eckstein, for his valuable assistance in the completion of my book.

RENÉ FULOP-MILLER.

VIENNA, *April* 1926.

NOTE ON THE PRONUNCIATION OF RUSSIAN NAMES

No Englishman can hope to pronounce Russian correctly witho tuition from a native teacher The following hints on the pronunci tion of the Russian names in this book are, therefore, offered only rough approximations

a = ah
e = yeh or eh
e = yaw or aw
é = eh
ı = ee or yee
o = aw (oı ă)
u = oo
ıa = yah
ıa = ee-yah
ıe = ee-yeh
ıı = ee or yee
ıu = you
y[1] = y in pity
g = g in get
s = s in sat
v = f at the end of words (elsewhere, as in vat)
kh = ch in loch
zh = s in pleasure (French *j*)
ch = ch in chat
sh = sh in ship
shch = shch in *fish cheap*
ts = ts in cats

All other consonants as in English.

The apostrophe after a consonant in or at the end of a Russia word denotes the Russian soft sign It modifies both the precedin consonant and vowel. It sounds rather like a light *y* (as in you).

As examples, Turgenev is pronounced Toor-gheh-nyef; Sergee = Ssaır-gheh-yef, Il'in = Eelyin, etc.

Translators.

[1] Used to transliterate the Russian letter *ery*, for which vowel there is n equivalent in English.

Chapter I

THE COLLECTIVE MAN

I

AN old folk legend, which was current among the Russian peasants long before the Revolution, announces the advent of a time when the " nameless beast " would succeed to the sovereignty of Russia, a beast which is nameless because it will be composed of the innumerable many Now it is here, the " nameless beast," and has set up its kingdom· the impersonal mass is lord of Russia, it is the most important new phenomenon which Bolshevism has produced, a reality which no one can disregard. Whether, like some monstrous creature of fable, it rolls through the streets of the great cities, now growling happily, now roaring with rage, or whether it lies down comfortably on one of the wide squares to enjoy, like an animal, the sun, life, and its own exuberant strength—the many thousand isolated personalities of which it is composed disappear, and we no longer recognize the simple worker in his workaday blouse, the soldier, the typist, the student, or the navvy. A mighty and powerful organism has absorbed them all into itself, and a single rumbling voice, incomprehensible and terrifying as the roar of the elements, has swallowed up all their individual cries, their joyful or angry words.

Anyone who is able to keep himself outside this mass, a foreigner, or an unorganized individual, perhaps retains the feeling that, here, too, it is human beings with whom he has to deal; but, at the same time, he dimly divines the new entity in this transformation to mass. For the voice that comes from its human throats is strange, and strange, too, the movements of the titanic, many-membered body. The individual feels it as a new and hostile phenomenon; he feels that the monster is sparing him to-day only, sooner or later, to destroy him with infallible certainty. But those, however, who firmly believe in the Revolution proclaim with ecstatic rapture that this sinister-seeming being is the great achievement of the century, the " new man "; such will be the aspect of that creature of the future which is called upon to take the place of the individual, and, from now on, to reign in his stead.

Awe-inspiring and in mighty pre-eminence, the mass confronts the individual, for it possesses the "multiple strength" of organization. It, too, once consisted of many helpless individuals, all seemingly abandoned to their blind "anarchical" fate; but now, united into mass, they stand forth powerful and feared, the secret of their strength is organization, there lies hidden the new salvation by which man may become master of life

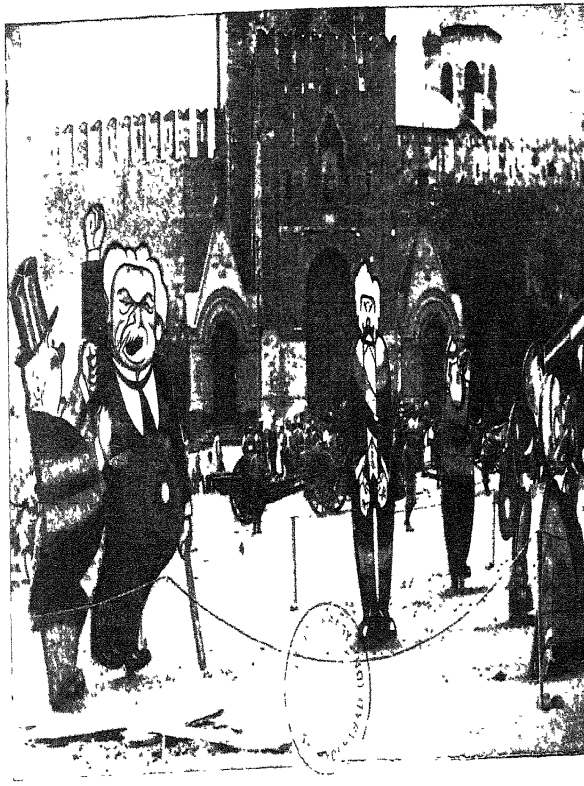
Only in Russia has the final secret of this one possible salvation been recognized, *i e*, that it is not so much the development of the soul that can lead humanity to a true re-birth, but that the end is rather to be reached through the mechanical, external, and purely cumulative combination of all individuals by means of organization

It is only by such external functions as the millions have in common, their uniform and simultaneous movements, that the many can be united in a higher unity marching, keeping in step, shouting "hurrah" in unison, festal singing in chorus, united attacks on the enemy, these are the manifestations of life which are to give birth to the new and superior type of humanity. Everything that divides the many from each other, that fosters the illusion of the individual importance of man, especially the "soul," hinders this higher evolution, and must consequently be destroyed. The "glorious external man" is henceforward to take the place of the inner man, organization is to be substituted for the soul For only the mechanically organized has reality, strength, and permanence, mechanism alone is reliable; only the "collective man," freed from the evil of the soul, mechanically united by external interests with all others, is strong To him alone belongs the empire of the future; only he will be able to reign therein "in the millenium."

But the unorganized individual, full of his personal cares, still sick with the vague mystery of the "soul," with that evil handed down from an accursed individualistic past, will be unable, on account of this soul, to find a place in the empire of the future.

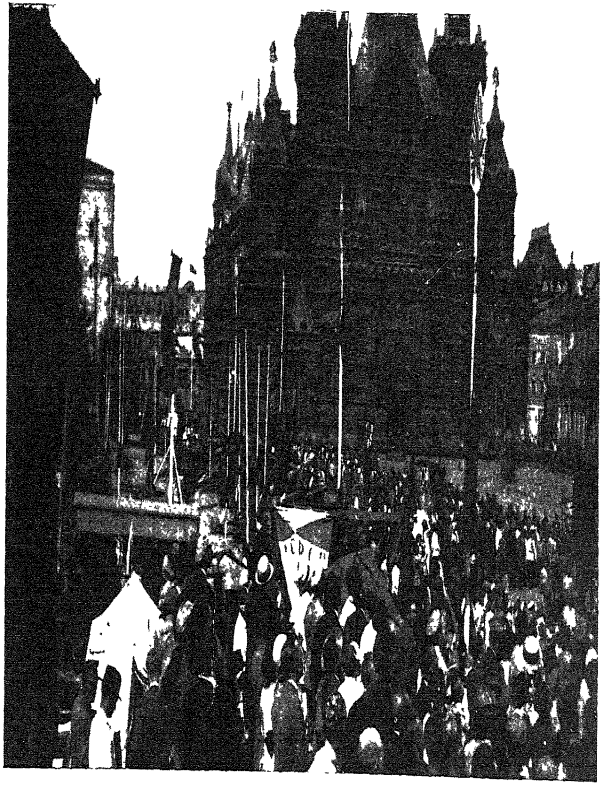
Strange must seem this meeting on the brink of time· here, on the one side, is still the individual, who to-morrow perhaps will be only a ghost from an epoch which has been won through, while there, only a few paces away and yet on the farther side of the gulf, stands already that superior new being elected to succeed the individual. The older man may see and grasp how the wonderful creature looks, and wherein it differs from himself and his kind.

But for the moment, at any rate, this mass entity produced by organization may only be recognized in its most primitive manifestations· wherever the "collective man" is seen, on the streets engaged in a demonstration, at festivals displaying a vociferous vitality, he at once gives the impression of a creature of the primitive world; his gigantic body is awkward, uncouth, and unwieldy; he



THE GIANT TOYS OF THE COLLECTIVE MAN

Figures of Lloyd George, Millerand, Kerenski and Milinkov in front of the Kremlin



MOSCOW

The " Red Square " before the Historical Museum decorated

rolls through the streets stamping with heavy tread; he surges up like an enormous wave, and bellows and roars like a great prehistoric monster And, like a prehistoric beast, he rejoices in his fearsome elemental howls, he relishes the joy which all living things feel in the animal working of their vital functions The collective man is at present living in his primeval state, exercising himself in the most primitive motions in action and speech, which were also the first steps in the development of the individual man

The First of May is his festival, his birthday, as it were, when his naive character is most clearly in evidence The " Red Square," with the magnificent " rows of shops," and the wall of the Kremlin are then richly decked with flowers and pine branches, and hung with many flags and streamers In the middle of the Square stand toys of various kinds, his birthday presents, gigantic dolls, trains, engines, and boilers made of papier-mâché Excited and delighted, the collective man stumps about with his thousand legs and shouts " Hurrah! hurrah! " from his thousand throats. Sometimes he stops suddenly, looks round, considers one by one the enormous figures made of cardboard or cloth stuffed with straw; all at once he notices that the dolls have the faces of foreign statesmen and capitalists, that is to say, of people against whom he has a grudge at the moment In a mad rage, he hurls himself against them, furiously tears out their stuffing, holds them in his many outstretched hands, and gloats in the intoxication of victory. Often the figures are hanged on a rope, the raging " mass " sticks a long tongue of red ribbon in their mouths, or burns them ceremoniously. All this is done with the naive cruelty of savages or children, with the primitive joy in smashing toys which is natural to both Like a child, the collective man, in his games, avenges himself on all his enemies He amuses himself in this way on the Red Square till late in the evening; if he finally gets tired, the megaphone from the platform above sounds the signal for " closing," and the mass man goes off and lies down obediently to sleep in his ten thousand beds.

But he is not always so good-humoured. If anyone attempts to doubt his power, at once he breaks into desperate fury, and there is no longer anything of childish glee about him The mere sight of him spreads terror and fear Suddenly, in the course of a few moments, he towers above the sea of houses, like a black, many-headed, gigantic beast, takes up a threatening stand before the Great Theatre, and remains motionless and waiting, ready to spring at any moment At such times, the thousands of individual entities are nothing but a great giant body crouched in mad rage, a single mighty movement, a single sinister shriek from countless throats.

For it is only in his rage that the collective man shows his strength; a fight is the element in which his real nature is most

strongly in evidence And this is a sure proof of the primitive state in which he still is, for it is exactly the attitude of prehistoric man to the outer world

It is difficult to draw any conclusions about his later development from these first manifestations of the collective man. He rejoices in play, in sunshine, in the untrammelled use of his throat and limbs, in gaily decorated squares and rows of houses; he is capable of resistance, terrible in anger, and proves himself in attack But instinctively we ask ourselves whether this " mass man " gives any promise of rising above organized prowling and growling, above attacks, and of becoming a superior being, whether he is really destined to contribute new values to history At present, seeing him still in the first stages of his development, we look in vain for that " collective mechanism " which, according to Bolshevist affirmations, is gloriously to replace the slaughtered individual soul; we can find very little trace of the constructive, creative capacities which alone can furnish the criterion of its historical vocation.

2

The dissolution and destruction of the " soul-encumbered " man of the past is not yet completed in Soviet Russia; the collective man is still actually to be seen only at festivals, at demonstrations, on the Red Square, on the streets, or at meetings in the great factory halls; in lonely homes, on the endless Sarmatian steppes, in the recesses of many Russian hearts the persecuted *old* man still lives on in secret; on the other hand, the visible authority over town and country, over the whole Russian realm, is solely and wholly in the hands of the " organized mass " The face and form of the new Russia, the pulse and rhythm of life, are determined not by those who stand aside cherishing in their heart the *old* man, numerous though they be, but by those who, out on the street, on the Red Square, or in the factory halls, stand organized in one mighty mass.

Everything that happens in Russia to-day happens for the sake of the mass; every action is subordinated to it. Art, literature, music, and philosophy serve only to extol its impersonal splendour, and, gradually, on all sides everything is being transformed to the new world of the " mass man " who is the sole ruler.

A fundamental upheaval has thus begun, and there can be no doubt that a new era is coming to birth. For what has been enacted in Russia is in truth more than a revolution in the ordinary meaning of the word we have to deal with something more important than a mere modification of social and political conditions, or of the social position of a few classes of the population. The revolution has touched the ultimate problems of mankind. With unheard-of bold-

ness, an attempt is being made in Russia to make a correction in the archetype of humanity itself, to wipe out the former type of the lord of creation, that " soul-encumbered individual creature," and to replace it by a " higher type," by what is believed to be a new and more valuable species of living being, by the " collective man," to replace the individual by the " dividual "

This ardent striving after the " mass man " arose in Russia at a moment when Western Europe was coming more and more to recognize the modern scientific theory that mass psychology is nothing but the reassertion of the old instincts of the primeval horde, a return, a " regression " of the human soul to the conditions of a prehistoric, primitive stage of development, which culture long ago surmounted, but which is still to be found occasionally, even now, among savage races. Le Bon first expressed the view that the individual acquisitions of the person were completely obliterated in the absorption into the mass, that then all the values which the isolated personality had built up for itself disappeared, so that thereafter only the unconscious racial heritage remains, and the heterogeneous is submerged in the homogeneous. The main characteristics of the individual existing in the mass are, therefore, a disappearance of conscious personality, and a predominance of the unconscious; the individual is no more himself, he has rather become ". an automaton with no will of his own " In Le Bon's judgment, man, by adherence to a mass, descends in the scale of civilization, although, in his isolation, he was perhaps a cultivated individual, once merged in the mass, he will become a barbarous creature of instinct, he will acquire the spontaneity, the impetuosity, the indiscriminating enthusiasm and heroism of primitive peoples.

The same view of the psychological deterioration of the individual man through absorption in the mass is also put forward by Siegmund Freud in his *Massenpsychologie und Ich-Analyse*. He, too, sees in the mass the decline of individual initiative, a reciprocal levelling of the most valuable qualities of the individual in favour of the joint mass reaction, and, therefore, a retrogression to primitive psychological conditions.

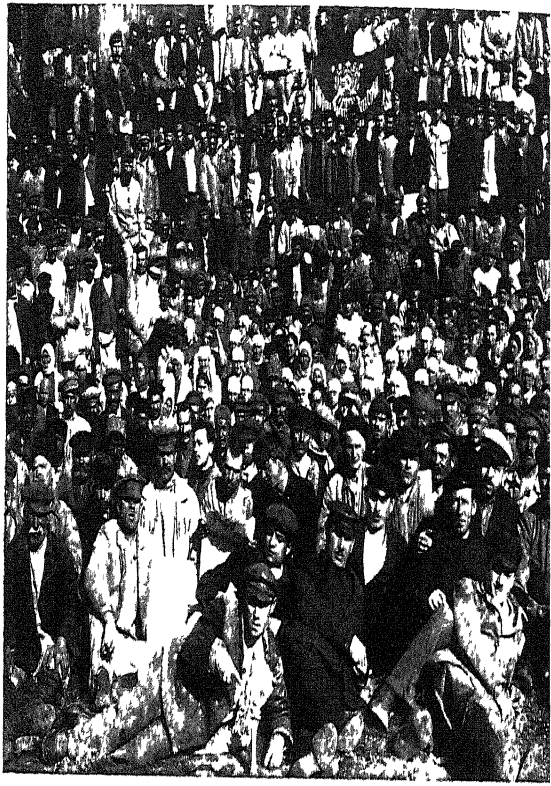
In contrast to the views of these Western European investigators, the Bolshevists find in the complete absorption of all individuals in a million-headed impersonal mass, the ideal of all development, for which they must strive with all their strength. The " collective man " means to them a " superior category," a higher, more valuable form of organization of existence, the realization of which is worth any sacrifice The poets of Bolshevism extol with apocalyptic rapture the coming empire of the mass man; thus the folk bard, Dem'ian Bednyi, proclaims in winged verses the conquest of the world by the new being:

" Million-footed · a body. The pavement cracks
A million mass one heart, one will, one tread!
Keeping step! Keeping step!
On they march On they march.
March, march . . .
Out of the factory quarters, smoke-wreathed,
Out of black dungeons, filthy rat holes,
He came—his fingers bent like pincers,
Burst the thousand year old chains rattling about him—
Came now the new ruler on to the street
Like flecks of blood
Crimson flags waved above him Steel-hard fists
Are raised aloft The bones of the bourgeoisie whine.
But he speaks
' All this is mine!
Streets, palaces, canals, the Exchange, the Bank,
Arcades, granaries, gold, materials, food and drink,
Libraries, theatres, museums,
Pleasure grounds, boulevards, gardens and avenues,
Marble and the splendour of bronze,
The poet's poem and the singer's song,
Towers, ships, cathedrals, space all around,
All this is mine! '
The houses thunder back. The highway clamours.
The giant stands fast."

But even the sober and professionally unimaginative historians and sociologists of Bolshevism write of this " higher collective being " in a tone of credulity which is in no way behind the dithyrambic outbursts of the Soviet poets. They, too, see a higher being in the impersonal mass, into which the whole of the still differentiated society of individual personalities is to be transformed, and they, too, are of opinion that the dissolution of all individuals in the " mass man " must be the ultimate and highest goal of all endeavour.

It is clear that in such a dogmatic negation of every kind of individual separate existence, no exception could be made even for the " commanding personality." Its unique importance, humbly recognized by the bourgeois world, has been unmasked as a fiction, and at the same time it had to be proved that the achievements of many individuals, however outstanding they might be, had no claim to personal character, since they too were nothing but a mere product of collective conditions, or, as Bukharin expressed it, " as it were a coagulated mass of compressed and tightly interwoven social influences." The rigid fanaticism with which the Bolshevist ideologues defend their theory that the collective-impersonal alone is

BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF A HOLIDAY PROCESSION OF THE MASSES IN LENINGRAD



THE MASS TAKES ITS TASK

eal and the separate existence of the single individual an illusion, is nost clearly evidenced by the fact that the notion received no check ven before Lenin, that truly unique personality who, by his very ndividual achievement, was the chief creator of Bolshevism When 'okrovski, the great historian of Soviet Russia, wanted to describe or the proletarian masses the significance of Lenin for the revolu- tionary development of humanity, he explained the Communist onception of the phenomenon "Lenin" in words which sound itterly fantastic to Western ideas· "We Marxians do not see 'ersonality as the maker of history, for to us personality is only the nstrument with which history works Perhaps a time will come vhen these instruments will be artificially constructed, as to-day we nake our electrical accumulators But we have not yet progressed o far, for the moment, these instruments through which history omes into being, these accumulators of the social process, are still 'egotten and born in an entirely elemental way."

Once the primacy of collectivism had been so decisively settled, ind the creation of the impersonal mass-man had been decreed to be he highest aim of the Bolshevik revolutionary upheaval, everything hat stood in the way of the coming of this new "collective man" iad forthwith to be fought with all weapons. Naturally, it was first he turn of the soul, the root of all particular life, which had to be nercilessly exterminated. The "soul-encumbered individual man" nust no longer be suffered to lead his pernicious separate life un- :hecked, above all, for the sake of the future, he must be annihilated n his premisses. These premisses include all particular ideas, all :onceptions, of whatever nature, of the importance of individuality, of the possession of spiritual or material assets; of the value of 'ersonal achievement and the struggle for an isolated inner develop- nent. But, further, all those precious cultural possessions accumu- ated by the individualism of past centuries, all the acquisitions of 'ersonal thought, all the creations of individuals, must be sacrificed vithout any "sentimentality," for they might hinder the arising of he new collective man.

3

This passionate protest against the value and significance of the ndividual personality, so hard for the Western European to under- stand, can only be explained by the specific cultural and intellectual nistory of Russia. The Russian has never been able to perceive the ultimate development of humanity except in a collective form, in a :onception of the collectivity, of the "people," into which even the Russian idea of God has always been retransformed; God and 'eople have always been identical for the greatest Russian thinkers.

This deification of the whole nation necessarily involved a disregard and finally a complete contempt for all personal values, and, in the end, for individuality itself. Russia has from time immemorial been the country of the impersonal-collective idea. The realization of this ideal was the aspiration of the Church, as well as of all the sects opposed to the Church, and of all the intellectual, cultural, and social currents, however they might differ from each other.

May it not be that this singular exaggeration of the value of the collective as opposed to the individual, peculiar to the Russian, this strange cast of thought, so alien to the West, has ultimately its root in the institution of serfdom, the century-long, complete oppression of great masses of the people, and with the view of the serf people as the impotent possession of a single master?

In his book, *Russian History and Philosophy of Religion*, which has become famous, Th. G. Masaryk makes the following statements with regard to serfdom in Russia: "It is almost impossible to-day for anyone to form even a faint image of Russian serfdom; even those who know the history of the institution, usually realize only the legal and economic aspect. But we must grasp its moral and social significance in its vital concreteness, the fact that the peasant was in bondage, body and soul, that the master could sell his serfs, that, up to the year 1833, the family of a serf could, at the master's pleasure, be broken up by the sale of one of its members as surely as it could be broken up by death.... The serf was currency in barter; the landowner staked his 'souls' at cards; he could make a present of them to his mistresses.... The picture of serfdom painted by the best writers in their memoirs is a terrible one; anyone who reads carefully the older Russian literature will discover everywhere this moral and social background."

Only a people who had for so long been under the yoke of despotic lords could find its highest ideal in a complete renunciation of the individual will; Russia, after all, never took a real and vital part in the great European intellectual development, which began with the decay of the Middle Ages, and which, by way of the newly discovered classical antiquity, and especially Platonism, rediscovered the idealistic methods of the exact sciences, with the art and politics intimately connected with them, and thus created an entirely new world, and above all a new conception of the autonomous personality. All that to-day we can call modern in the true sense of the word may be traced back to this historical connection.

Russia, however, which, in the school of Byzantium, went other ways, and, even in the geographical sense, gave Europe a wide berth, remained completely alien to all this. The Russian never knew that evolution from the stuffy narrowness of the Middle Ages to a free

universal humanity, which Europe experienced It was not only the mass of serfs who never succeeded in attaining to a free development of their personality. serfdom in the same way corrupted the masters too Masaryk makes some observations also on this point, based on Prince Kropotkin's memoirs:

" Kropotkin in his memoirs draws a poignant picture of the moral effects of serfdom on the Russian aristocracy In fact, with every form and degree of slavery, we must consider not only the effect on the slaves, but also on the slave-owners. Every form of slavery is everywhere and always a double and two-fold thing—as the master, so is the slave, as the slave, so is the master Both are slave souls, the slave and his master Therein lies the curse of slavery—a hierarchy of slaves, from the Tsar down to the last village pasha, men who will not and cannot work because they are free to use their fellow men as machines."

Even later, the man of the steppes could never get rid of the stamp of everlasting bondage, oppression, and suffering, and when at last in the 'sixties he attempted to free himself from the typical Russian yoke, he could not pass beyond the nihilistic protest of the individual. The Russian recognized personality only in such distortions as Dostoevski described in his " Underworldlings," rotten with solipsism and impotent, or again in the groping efforts which were to be noticed in Russian society before the Revolution Maxim Gorki has given an excellent description of that pitiful sham existence, that farce of individuality. But only in this way can it be explained how even so important a thinker as he could arrive at the strange view that the individual has, in general, no right to existence all the value of life must be credited solely and exclusively to the collectivity, and the significance of personal achievement is altogether trifling, since the collectivity alone is the power which creates all material values, and at the same time the source of everything spiritual

Since Gorki, too, recognizes personality only as a part of the " true reality as represented by the mass," and allows it no rights outside this relation, he sees in the development which personality had taken in the Russian middle classes, the public proof of their nullity and the cause of their well-earned overthrow. In his essay on *The Destruction of Personality*, Gorki has described, in impressive words, this gradual decay of individuality, which made itself felt even before the Revolution. At the same time, thus early he proclaims that new vital power which is destined to replace personality, the " collective man," only to be realized later by Bolshevism.

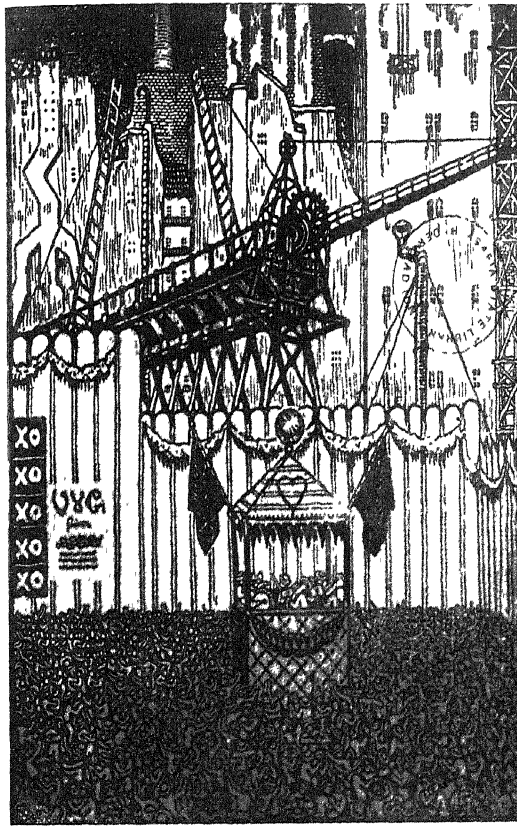
In the light of after events in Russia, it is doubly interesting to

note how Gorki, even then, foresaw the utter decay of personality: "Contemporary society," he says in the essay already quoted, "already feels the earth trembling beneath its feet This is clearly to be perceived in their whole mode of thought, and makes itself most plainly felt in the general fear of the coming days

"The soul of men is a desert; they are all shudderingly afraid that next morning may throw up something unknown and hostile in this desert, and that the over-ripe social question will rise up in their soul like a sphinx Because man is aware that necessity fatefully awaits him, and that he is no match for it, he tries to hide from it in the deepest darkness"

Gorki goes on to describe how the "little rickety ego, shaking with fear, spiritually impoverished, and bewildered in the darkness of contradictions," is ludicrously trying to find a quiet corner to hide in But while personality is writhing in its death agony, the great new community is already taking shape. "Step by step this power is beginning to be conscious of itself, to recognize that it alone is destined to create life anew as the great joint soul of the universe In the eyes of the individualists, this phenomenon seems like a cloud on the horizon, they shrink from it as from physical death, for this new force means social extinction for them. Each of them is proud of his own personality, as if this deserved special regard, but democracy, which seeks to renew the life of man, will pay no attention to these aristocrats of the intellect. Some of the individualists already grasp the great importance of what is to come, and are attempting to sneak into the socialist ranks as legislators, prophets, or commanders. But the people must and will recognize that the readiness of the bourgeoisie to go with them is only a concealed attempt to maintain individual personality."

This prophecy made by Maxim Gorki long before the Revolution, was later to be fulfilled by Bolshevism, the destruction of all personal values and the advent of the "collective man." But before this point could be reached, some Bolshevists had attempted to oppose the complete depersonalization of life, although they were immediately branded as heretics, and accused of lacking Communist convictions. Even Lunacharski, the People's Commissar, who, in spite of his high position in the Bolshevik Government, has never been able to suppress entirely a secret leaning towards the culture of the old world, was prevented by his own Party from publishing under his own name a book in which he attempted to support the view that personality had certain rights even in a proletarian community. It would have been regarded in Bolshevist circles as compromising the Party if a leading member of the Government had been officially associated with heretical notions of this kind; Lunacharski was therefore obliged to publish anonymously in Berlin a



PROJECT FOR A COMMUNIST MASS FESTIVAL, DEDICATED TO THE "VISIBLE GOD" THE MACHINE

(Drawing by M. Dobuvinski)

"BOLSHEVISM"

(Painting by Kustodev)

' private opinion," which was in complete opposition to the " pre-scribed mechanico-collective " interpretation. But even this work, signed with the initials N N., in the epilogue to which the translator merely faintly hinted that the unnamed author was a Russian, " who is taking an active part in the building up of Soviet Russia," was banned in Russia. In this publication, Lunacharski makes the not uninteresting attempt to plead for the rights of the active individual personality in the communist sense, in so far as it proceeds from collective unity, and brings " something new, unique, and indestructible " into life. Lunacharski actually forgot himself so far as to pen this sentence: " We, who are fighting for a social ideal, are in the long run striving for human individuality. We are fighting for individuality by championing social and universally human interests "

This grievous offence against the mechanico-collectivist dogma of the Party naturally could not fail to cause consternation among the rest of the Bolshevists, and rouse the strongest mistrust of Lunacharski. Thereafter, the view gained acceptance that, though Lunacharski had contributed very greatly to the victory of communism, he was personally not a true Marxist, and therefore was not entitled to be regarded as representing the Bolshevist view of life, which does not recognize personality under any circumstance nor in any form, however veiled, but condemns everything which attempts in any way to deviate from the strictly mechanical interpretation. For the true Bolshevist, the individual, even in his most highly developed manifestation, is a mere materially conditioned part of the collective mechanism.

4

It is true that milleniary doctrines of earlier ages had also set themselves the task of bringing all men together in a league for higher unity; but all the attempts of those times to reach such a union were upheld by faith in the creative power of the soul, and by the conviction that only the soul could give men the power to break through the narrow confines of the ego and to merge in the higher universal being. Quite different is the way in which the materialist visionaries of the new age would have the collective man come into being: they see their goal in the very reverse of soul-development, in the mortification of the inner man, in the raising of external common action to a higher power, and in a purely mechanical coherence of the many for joint activity. For only in external human beings can be found the elements from which real collectivity can be manufactured; the inner life is so infinitely differentiated, so inextricably bound up with the nature and vicissitudes of the individual,

that an association of all, of the kind aimed at by the Bolshevists can be attained only through the multiplication of the external functions It is only out of these " material collectivities " that mass action, the most important manifestation of the collective man, can be created. Only from the organization of external collectivity can come the coalescence of individuals into a unity, and the dissolution of the isolated personality, by means of which the soul-encumbered individual man may hope gradually " to rid himself of his soul "

The " superpersonal " ideal of the Bolshevists is thus conceived of as a purely quantitative combination of individual mass-particles into the largest and most homogeneous conglomerate possible While the earlier belief was that the road to salvation, to a higher universal humanity, lay through the perfection of individual personality, Bolshevism has attempted to show that the true path of salvation leads through the annihilation of the individual in a " mass man " externally organized For the sake of this phantasmagoria, this new and unknown thing, all who believe in Bolshevism have one by one gone like lambs to the sacrifice, and have offered up and for ever destroyed their own souls Therefore it is not enough to consider only the abolition of private property if we are to understand what a terrible hara-kiri the *old* man has had to undergo in Russia We must know the new philosophy and the new morality of the Bolshevists, and listen to the Russian poets who are held in honour to-day; we must have been present at performances of Bolshevist " noise orchestral music," have seen the geometric theatre and the new pictures, taken part in the joyless joy of the Bolshevists, before we can measure the frightful, insanely great sacrifice which Russia has made to an arid idea.

In Russia, a world is arising without personal joy in life, with pictures without colour, music without harmony, with an outlook on life lacking the inner support of the spirit, a mechanized world which in future will contain nothing but soulless machines.

To-day, the collective man may appear like a miracle, but already his prophets are proclaiming that the time is at hand when society will finally cast off everything " chaotically vital," everything " mystically organic," in order ultimately to realize the highest idea of a completely lifeless mechanism.

With an anger that recalls the language of fanatical prophets, the Bolshevists condemn all who want to smuggle a " psyche " into the mechanically constructed collective man, and thus to plant in him that germ of disintegration which is fundamentally implicit in every kind of " psyche " The collective man, as born in the Bolshevist Revolution, is to be in no way a psychical organism; the connecting basis for mechanized humanity is formed not by " spiritual motives,"

but solely by the material connection of the many in a joint apparatus or work and production. Bukharin, one of the heralds of the mechanized collective man, asks contemptuously whether it would ever occur to anyone to define the state of the bees as a " psychical whole " or a " spiritual community," although we speak of the instincts and, in a figurative sense, of the " soul-life " of the bees. However, when we describe these insects, we classify them from a social standpoint, and divide them into working bees, drones and queens It is thus the material working apparatus of the bee state that first of all attracts attention Why therefore, asks Bukharin, should the human community in future be judged by any other standard, since the notion of the divine origin of man is absurd?

Another interpretation of the new collective man, suspected by reason of its nature of being inspired by counter-revolutionary motives, is rejected with equal rigour; that is the view that the mass man has the character of a biological organism. For, ever since the parable related by Menenius Agrippa, the intention of such comparisons has been known only too well they have no other purpose than to justify the repression of the plebeians. And all similar theories are made to bear the same meaning, such as Auguste Comte's " *organisme collectif*," or Herbert Spencer's " superorganized being," possessing organs and tissues but not consciousness, or finally that of Lilienfeld, who saw collectivism as a huge beast like a crocodile. All these theories which would interpret the essence of the collective as a " psychical " or " biological " form of society, serve purposes which are entirely counter-revolutionary.

The higher phenomenon, however, towards which the classless communist society is striving, the organized " dividual," will be neither tainted by a psyche nor governed by bourgeois, biologically conceived centres and organs The only organic attribute he retains appears to be the skeleton, which supplies the working apparatus of the uniform social man As Bukharin says on the Bolshevist human collectivity, the conditions of production " will represent the bony structure, the skeleton of the whole social body."

Finally, certain Bolsheviks, whom the grace of the materialistically conceived law of nature has endowed with the capacity for scientific prophecy, already discern and proclaim the time when, with the progressive mechanizing of all manifestations of life, the last human remnants of everything organic will be sloughed off and replaced by mechanism. Then the skeleton of productive conditions will be finally transformed into the mechanical component parts of a gigantic productive automaton which will function reliably, and thereby will be realized the ideal collective man, for whom the Bolshevists are striving.

5

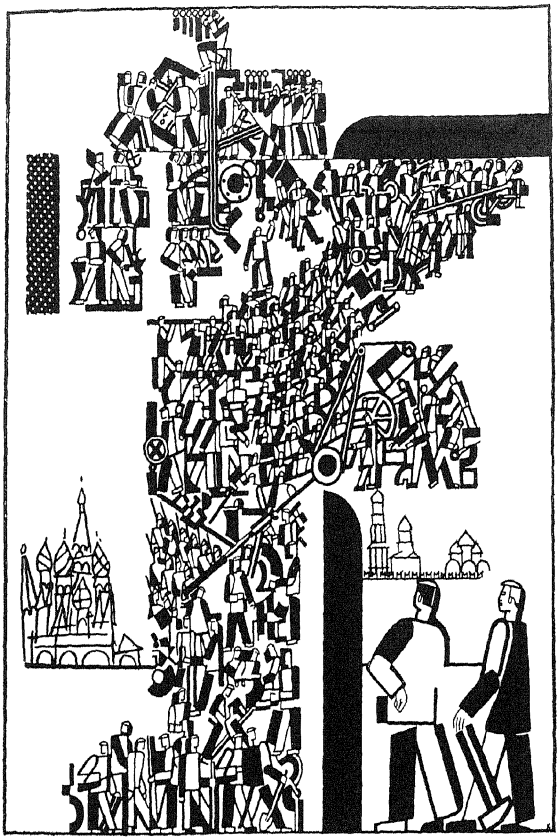
The complete fantasticality of the notion of transforming humanity into an enormous automaton can only be made to some extent psychologically comprehensible if we consider, in their primitive form, the ideas and feelings out of which, by a disastrously false association, the abstruse conception of a " mechanized collective man " must have arisen in Russia

The first ideas of an association of humanity in larger communities date back to a very early primitive period, and are related to the peculiar " pre-logical " intellectual nature of the primitives, to their totemism, their strange " collective conceptions," and their thinking in the form of " participations," which preceded abstract thought Only by starting from this time can we understand the later stages in the cosmogony of the mystics of all times and countries, in which the primitive world of thought and feeling appears in a new, transfigured form In this phase of thought, the old collective notions and participations are transformed into sublime conceptions, such as the *Civitas Dei* of Augustine, the many later poetico-mystic Utopias, and, finally, the idea of a " realm of design," which is to be found in the philosophy of Kant.

But while in Western Europe the primitive, totemistic idea of a collective and animal association of mankind in tribes was soon sublimated and intellectualized, great masses of the Russian people retained entirely primitive conceptions, and were never able to rise to the idea of a community of mind, because the common Russian view of collectivism has always had in it something of the notion of a physical and sensuous " participation " as its final aim.

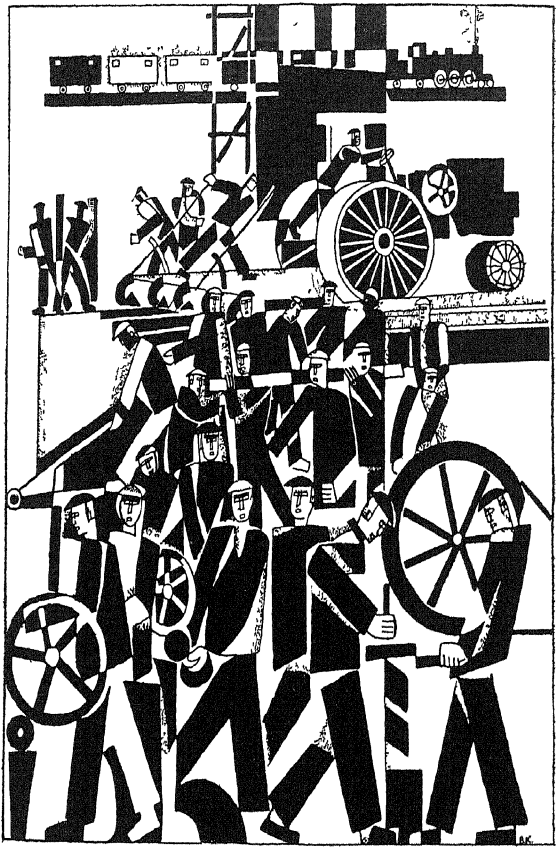
Almost all the great critical thinkers of Russia attribute this state of things to the absolutely ineradicable lack in many Russians of any understanding of the objective value of an idea. They have almost all been unable to grasp deep thoughts except on the subjective and sensuous side, and thus by " community " they understood only a kind of general economic equalization, the communal satisfaction of the utilitarian requirements of the whole of the people, so that the ultimate spiritual meaning of collectivism always remained a closed book to them.

The well-known Russian philosopher, Berdiaev, observes that, as the Russian was not in a position to believe in objective values or to understand them at all, he was forced to consider that the only meaning of an idea lay in its power to increase material well-being, which ultimately and necessarily led to a peculiarly exaggerated esteem for and worship of subjective utilitarian interests. " The multiform task of raising collective existence to an objectively higher



THE MECHANIZED INDIVIDUAL IS REDUCED TO A MERE COMPONENT PART IN THE MASS WHICH HAS BECOME THE MACHINE

(Constructivistic-symbolical drawing by Kunski)



III "MECHANIZED LABOUR"
(Constructivistic-symbolical drawing by Krinskij

stage," Berdiaev goes on, " is the vital cultural conception, so powerful in its spiritual influence, which animates the European With us, on the contrary, culture as we conceive it, bears the unmistakable stamp of utilitarianism "

This limitation of all conceptions of the meaning of community to purely utilitarian ends is perhaps also to be attributed to the social servitude imposed on the Russian people for hundreds of years. It is only when we consider that the first glimmerings of close interdependence must have arisen in Russia through community in social disabilities, deprivations, and suffering, that we can begin to understand how universal economic equality must have seemed the highest ideal. The Russian refused to be content with a merely ideal and purely ethical collectivism, which is perfectly compatible with the morally free personality of the individual, and even has this as its exact aim

The Bolsheviks, who promised to bring salvation to Russia, ignored the ideal aims in the collectivist theories of socialism; they neglected everything in the doctrines of Marx that went beyond and expediency, and took from Socialism only the conceptions of economic collectivity in which they found the promise of a material paradise on earth, the equal distribution of goods, and the possession of the world by the disinherited But by thus exalting economic materialism without more ado to a kind of millennial doctrine, the real deeper meaning of socialism was subjected to a completely one-sided interpretation.

That which in the teaching of Marx was meant merely as an economic premiss or starting-point for the real ideal end, became the end itself in the eyes of the Bolshevists. Their yearning for a Kingdom of Heaven on earth led them to regard economic collectivism as the salvation of humanity from all evil, and to make it the sole content of Bolshevism.

Thus a fundamentally ethical conception, the idea of the brotherly union of all men, was transformed into the curious notion that all individual persons without exception must be merged in a mechanized economic body.

How this complete perversion of the basic idea of socialism finally culminated in the peculiar social theories of the Bolshevists is best explained by the historico-critical reports of the " Boundary Posts " on the Russian intelligentsia, which have already become an important contribution to intellectual history The Russian intelligentsia was the class which introduced Western socialism into Russia, and has, therefore, become most important in any consideration of the later development of the revolutionary movement. Sergei Bulgakov rightly remarks that the Russian intelligentsia supplied the Revolution with " its entire stock of ideas, a complete

intellectual equipment for all outposts, sharp-shooters, agitators, and propagandists." But with regard to this pre-revolutionary intelligentsia, it is noted in the " Boundary Posts " that their attitude to the truth was always selfish and subjective, they demanded from it not knowledge, but merely the means to the material happiness of humanity. " Our whole spiritual history is glaringly coloured with utilitarianism," wrote the sociologist N Frank at that time " Beginning with the enthusiastic worship of the natural sciences in the 'sixties and continuing right up to the present time, the intelligentsia never sought scientific truth, but always mere practical advantage, from the creations of thinkers."

Thus an entirely one-sided interpretation of Western socialism was current in Russia before Bolshevism, the Revolution merely carried a false interpretation of ideas to its furthest consequences, the combination of dreams of a millennium coming from the sphere of the emotions with economic and scientific dogmas of a national character. But therein lies the cultural and historical significance that Bolshevism has for Russian spiritual life, namely, that by its agency all these false ideas, which previously were latent, were realized and carried to absurdity Therefore, Bolshevism in Russia has a significance beyond that of a mere " political experiment ", it is much more the revolutionary discharge of an elemental spiritual destiny, for which the way had long been prepared in the thinking of the Russian intelligentsia

But even in its ultimate deductions, Bolshevism closely follows a " natural law of Russian spiritual life " For in Russia every idea pushes on to its practical incarnation, both good and bad, right and wrong; nothing remains abstract, everything is at once converted into concrete reality In obedience to this innermost law of the Russian nature, in Russia even errors in thought must take life and form; they begin to breathe, to move, to create, and to destroy

Thus the earthly manifestation of all Russian ideas became the sole criterion of their value to those who held them, and purely spiritual concepts, such as those of idealistic philosophy, were always felt by Russians to be alien to their nature; such conceptions could find no real reception; but, on the other hand, everything that promised an earthly materialization of ideas always made the strongest impression on Russian minds.

To this national characteristic may also be traced the great influence exerted by Russian sects with their promises of an earthly Paradise, as well as the fascination which a materialistic view of life and " popularized Marxism " seemed to exercise over men's minds. But no other idea corresponded so exactly to this leaning of the Russian towards the conceptions of primitive magic as Bolshevism,

that doctrine peculiarly made for the Russian mind, which laid the main stress precisely on practical demonstration. Lenin's formula that all theoretical knowledge must be at once and on the spot converted into practice, exactly corresponded to the deep need of the Russian national soul for direct materialization.

Thus in Russia the Marxian theory of social evolution was apprehended from the beginning as the practical demonstration of a doctrine of salvation. According to Karl Marx, Engels, and the modern Socialists, society is gradually to advance from its primitive "anarchical" economic forms, first by the inevitable road through a concentrated form of capitalism to more and more rational methods of organization, and finally to a universal collectivism of work and production. But this which Marx and his disciples regarded merely as a gradual process of evolution, the Bolshevists wished to turn forthwith into a concrete thing, a new and vital being, for once they had mastered the idea of collectivism, they wished straightway to have an infallible, material proof of it, the physical manifestation of the conception. The historic and economic process of evolution in the direction of collectivism was, as it were, in an instant transformed by Bolshevism into a spiritualist "phenomenon of materialization," into the million-footed monster apprehensible by the senses, the "mass-man."

This impatient desire for a materially apprehensible manifestation of spiritual things is shared by the Russian Bolshevists with the disciples of that other faith which is so primitive and materialist in tendency, and to which they are deeply akin in many other points as well, with spiritualism. It is easy to recognize in the peculiarly banal, dogmatic instructions for the artificial creation of the Bolshevist collective man, a ritual analogous to that of the "séances." The "spirit circle" of Bolshevism is "party organization", the "séance" in which the "collective presence" is corporeally manifest becomes the street demonstrations, and finally the formulas for raising the spirits are: "Left! left!" "Bash their heads in!" or "Historic materialism." And when all the magical conditions for a Bolshevist séance have been created, there appears, growing out of the circle, the phenomenon of the collective monster, who remains for a period among those who have conjured it up; it breathes, moves, and lives for the duration of the demonstration.

Bolshevism, therefore, proves itself naive and primitive at the very point where it imagines it has overtrumped Western socialism by means of a magnificent innovation, namely, the attempt by mere formulae of conjuration to put the Marxian idea of gradual social evolution immediately into practice, and thereby artificially to create the corporeal collective man.

6

Since one of the basic ideas of Western European socialism, the conception of a continually active economic law of evolution, has been hopelessly entangled in this way with naive magical formulae, it is not surprising that all the other conceptions borrowed from Marxism have also been further developed in an entirely false direction. In contrast to the endeavours of socialist philosophers in Western Europe like Hermann Cohen, Paul Natorp, Karl Vorlander, and Max Adler, who aim at substituting for the long outgrown, materialistic interpretation of Marxism, a scientifically ideal one, the Bolsheviks have decreed this materialism, so suited to their national character, to be the highest principle, even the sole content of socialism It is proudly proclaimed that the orthodox materialistic view of life is the only scientific view of life, and therefore the right one At the same time, in Russia, where these manifestations of the human spirit were accessible only to a very small minority, the notion " scientific " received an almost religious, ecstatic emphasis

The true reasons for this fanatical enthusiasm for " scientific materialism " are once more to be sought solely in the peculiar backwardness of considerable sections of the population of Russia " Materialism, the reduction of the whole universe to mass and motion, and thus the total denial of the spiritual, has," as Notzel says in his excellent book, *The Foundations of Spiritual Russia*," from time immemorial been the philosophy of men discontented with life and, especially, of the disillusioned And what nation had ever greater reasons for *Weltschmerz* than the Russian people, who for so long bore the double spiritual yoke of foreign overlordship and tyranny at home? . . . But there was a further reason which attracted the Russian community to materialism it always owed a large part of its popularity to the fact that it represented the real work of the intellect, especially the work of the intellectual sciences, as valueless, as mere vain trifling. That exactly met the needs, dictated by self-preservation, of men who, for reasons either of a material or a political nature, steered clear of mental culture or in some way were afraid of free thought. . What then could be more welcome to intellectual Russia—the process may be completely unconscious—than to be told that all the intellectual discoveries of Europe were useless trifling—as, of course, all consistent materialism must teach? "

It was for this reason that the purely mechanistic theory of salvation offered by Bolshevism was so welcome to the great mass of the people, to whom personality in its freedom, pride, and re-

ponsibility was completely unknown For it declared automatic ıction to be the highest ideal, and undertook further to make no lemands on the creative energies of the worker and on his ındepend-ınt personality, but was, on the contrary, ready to " release " every-ıne from ındependent ınıtıative and ındependent judgment. In he factory paradise of the Bolshevists, no one was to be faced with ɔersonal decisions, for the communist State asked merely for blind ɔbedience and veıy limited mental attainments. This hope of a eign of complete ıntellectual ırresponsibility for the ındividual was ɔeıhaps the maınspring of the attraction which the Bolshevist heory had for the Russian masses, and was that which ensured it so apıd a triumph

" The mechanism of State control of ındustry," wrote Lenın ın a ɔamphlet on the constitution of the future Bolshevik State, " ıs ılready ın existence Since the overthrow of the capitalists and the mashing of the bureaucratic machinery of the modern State, we ıave at our disposal a mechanism of high technical perfection, freed rom all parasites, which the united workers themselves could very asily set ın motion by engaging technicians, superintendents, or ɔookkeepers Registration and supervision are the chief things ıeeded to bring the first phase of the communist social order ınto ɔeing and prepare for its proper functioning. All citizens will be vorkers, manual or non-manual, ın a State syndicate. It is merely a uestion of their all doing the same work, carrying out their task ɔroperly, and receiving the same wage. Registration and the exercise ıf supervision have been highly simplified by capitalism and con-eıted ınto extraordinarily convenient methods of check and book-eeping, which are accessible to anyone who can read and write nd do simple arithmetic. . The whole of society will be an office ır a factory doing the same work and receiving the same wages. . . "

The impersonal collective man whose development required not the lightest moral independence, but merely blind mechanical obedience, hus formed the " ideal of the Russian communists ": he was a reation which made all individual accomplishment superfluous, ıiraculous powers—ın this case, organization—were to accomplish he necessary work of salvation, for which earlier orthodox concep-ıons looked to the grace of God

The complete subordination of all individuals to the impersonal rganization of an automatic collectivity passes ın Soviet Russia for upreme happiness; moreover, it is the sole guarantee for the uccess of the collective man.

There can be no doubt that the progressive collectivation of trade nd ındustry must in fact lead to a greater mechanization of work nd production, and, finally, must make them completely automatic This will first of all affect economic life, then in a certain sense, as

time goes on, the other forms of social existence also Both in Europe and America, that is to say, in the countries in which the mechanization of trade and industry has made the greatest progress, the influence of this process on life is regarded as an undesirable attendant symptom, and not as the chief and the real aim of modern development In contrast to the intoxicated enthusiasm with which Russians speak of the application of the mechanizing process to the whole of existence, Europeans describe the invasion of their life by technical elements in a completely sceptical fashion Walter Rathenau, who, during the world war, by the organization of the centralized management of industry in Germany, was the first to give an example of mechanized trade and industry on a large scale, and was thus able ten years ago to realize a great part of what now floats before Russian eyes as a dream of the future, gave a somewhat pessimistic verdict on human life as completely absorbed by this kind of mechanization With extraordinary clearness, he described these tendencies to mechanization as a " spirit of abstract utility and systematically futile thought, without wonder and without humour, of the greatest complexity and at the same time of deadly uniformity "; and he sees in the reactions of mechanization on the life of society anything but positive values.

Rathenau regards a mechanized form of life as an " endless gyration ", it is a " self-multiplying machinery without external tendency ", being complete in itself, it can neither create absolute ends and values nor even recognize or develop them. " Must it not in the end necessarily tend to silence all the questions, hopes, and dreams of humanity, because these immaterial emotions distract men from the working process? "

Although the mechanization of life is still in its infancy, it already has, in Rathenau's opinion, death at its heart " For in the depths of consciousness the world shudders at itself; its inmost impulses arraign it and struggle to free themselves from the bonds of continual utilitarian conceptions "

In America, too, mechanization is regarded in the same light. the great manufacturers who, like Ford, are attempting to justify an automatic system and to deny the injurious effect which purely repetitive, mechanical work has on men, are obliged to confess that the continual repetition of one and the same process is " loathsome to some people." " It would be a ghastly thought to me," says Ford; " I simply could not do the same thing day in day out " And even Ford would certainly reject as a crazy scheme the ideal that this mechanization should be artificially extended from the factory to life itself.

The American view of the mechanizing of life as a whole is seen still more clearly in the utterances of Arthur Pound, a very keen

"LET US TAKE THE STORM OF THE REVOLUTION IN SOVIET RUSSIA, UNITE IT TO THE PULSE OF AMERICAN LIFE, AND DO OUR WORK LIKE A CHRONOMETER!"

(Gastev's appeal for Americanization)

A TEMPLE OF THE MACHINE-WORSHIPPERS

A Byzantine dome Instead of angels, figures of communist agitators have been placed in the spandrels, for their heads wheels have been substituted, which are set in motion from the altar by means of driving belts In the foreground the mechanized community (Drawing by Klinski)

observer, who has taken an active share in the industrial development of his country. He acknowledges the impressive richness of modern mechanization as a proof of advance in organization, uniformity, and power over nature But he sees in this evolution not the sum total of all life's happiness, but the complete destruction of all that makes life valuable. It is perversity to see an ideal aim in automatization; the salvation of humanity lies rather in those remnants of the life of the soul which can never be entirely mechanized and standardized. Arthur Pound hopes that, in the individual, great tracts still remain pure and unadulterated by mechanization, for " the purely economic and systematic man is something abstract, possessing a certain value perhaps for a scientific investigation," but he can never exist in flesh and blood. Man is not only an economic object, but a living, feeling, and suffering being in thousands of other relationships. He follows his instinct of self-preservation not only economically, but biologically; he loves, marries, fights, is always troubling himself with problems great and small, leads his own life and defends it to the uttermost " He may be enrolled as labour machine, number 3141 in a factory, but he will none the less always be fundamentally different from number 3140, number 3142, and all other creatures alive or dead."

Man will thus never become an automatic appendage of the machine, never will the machine be able to take complete possession of humanity; " for as a muscle which is never used does not lose its power without resistance and thereby gives pain to its owner, so the unused intellectual capacities will one day rise up and fight for existence with all their might " This process will, in Pound's view, lead in the end to the workers leaving the factories in ever-increasing numbers, and thus evoke a fresh revolution of the whole of economic life.

7

Such is the verdict on mechanization in that " paradise of machinery," America, where the automatization of trade and industry has been carried to the highest pitch so far reached; where in an exactly prescribed number of seconds a motor car ready for use is produced from a confused heap of raw material; where grain is harvested by machinery, automatically measured, weighed, and packed; where the Taylor system analyses scientifically every movement of the worker and gives it its place in a strictly enforced psycho-technical system of work; that is, in the country where all this is an everyday matter, a state of affairs of which the Russians, centuries behind the times, can still only dream.

In Russia, there is scarcely any industry; the factory proletariat sinks into insignificance compared with the great masses of the

peasantry, in the country, the soil is still worked with the most primitive tools, everywhere, so far as agricultural and industrial technique is concerned, Asiatic medieval methods of work and organization prevail. But it is just here that there is continual talk about "American mechanization," which is regarded as the loftiest expression of human perfection.

We can now understand how, for the Bolsheviks, industrialized America became the Promised Land. At an earlier period, the "intelligentsia" still looked for their models in Europe, but, immediately after the Revolution, a wild enthusiasm for America started; the magnificent industrial works of Germany and the highly perfected plant of France and England, all at once appeared paltry to Soviet Russia, they began to dream of Chicago and to direct their efforts towards making Russia a new and more splendid America

Sosnovski, the Bolshevist "court writer," made a suggestion, in the very first years of the Revolution, that Russians should be bred up to be Americans "It is above all a question," he wrote, "of seeking and finding new men, men whom we will call 'Russian Americans,' and thereafter of helping the Party and the Soviets to put these men in the right place and to take measures to prevent our gaping boobies from silencing them in the first stages, for in the natural course of their activities, these 'Americans' will learn to defend themselves and get the better of the boobies Our 'Americans' must be placed under the protection of the whole people, they must be welded into a cohort of steel and all others must be compelled to regulate themselves by them . In the year 1923, the new self-organizing party of 'Russian Americans,' for whom a stay in America is in no way necessary, will declare a war of extinction on all Russian boobies. . . . Alas! I have only a little American blood in my veins; but I feel in my whole being the approach of this new race of men, and I place my pen at their service."

This grotesque disparity between the aims of the Bolsheviks and the preliminary conditions laid down for their attainment, is one of the most characteristic traits of Russian Bolshevism. For the very reason that practically no industry and no trained technicians exist in Russia, advanced industry and the real engineer are there held to be the bearers of the loftiest wisdom and prophets of the "noblest revelations." One must have heard the tone of naively enthusiastic infatuation in which the Bolsheviks speak of the simplest technical achievements, the religious ecstasy with which they rave about "rationalized industry," "mechanization," and "complete automata," to understand how deep is their longing for all these marvels of American civilization, hitherto denied to them.

The entirely romantic notions which have been formed in Russia

of American conditions are seen most clearly in the epic of the Bolshevist poet Maiakovski, which describes America, the land of technical, mechanical perfection. This Russian prophet of America dreamt of a legendary Chicago and gave his model many phantastic characteristics

" Chicago City,
Built upon a screw!
Electro-dynamo-mechanical city!
Spiral-shaped—
On a steel disc—
At every stroke of the hour
Turning around itself—
Five thousand sky scrapers—
Granite suns!
The Squares
Mile-high they gallop to Heaven,
Crawling with millions of men,
Woven of steel hawsers,
Flying Broadways.
On the points of your eye-lashes
Electric light
Clings to you, crackling . . .
Smoke signs in the air—
Phosphorescent inscriptions! "

But in spite of all this fantastic veneration for Chicago and " Chicagoism," the Bolsheviks have many faults to find with their model, the chief defect being the lack of the true political form, the dictatorship of the proletariat, which alone is able to develop society into the longed-for " complete automaton " Only Bolshevism can give the final perfection to this technical wonderworld. For even in America mechanization is still confined to economic life, limited to the factories. Even the American, the moment he leaves his work place, falls a victim to the demon of individualism and of " soul-stuff "; he lives, loves, occupies himself with his family and his private affairs, is, in a word, an individual, and not permanently a " constituent part of the great social machine." This is exactly where America falls short of the Russian standard, and it is of course ascribed mainly to the defects of the bourgeois social order. The American, it is true, was the first to create the mechanistic-technical spirit, but he is trying to sneak away from its social consequences, and aims at continuing to preserve outwardly the soulful face of the good-natured, honest man.

In order to overcome this last obstacle which still stands in the way of perfect automatization, a radical change in political and social

forms is necessary, communism in short, the mission of communism is to perfect the mechanization which is already highly developed in America, to apply it to all forms of existence, and to replace the innumerable "soul-encumbered" individuals by the completely automatized "collective man."

8

Once the Russians with their religious fanaticism had adopted the principle of impersonality and mechanization, it followed naturally that they found religious ideas and dogmas in everything which like organization and technique, was allied with collectivist evolution For in Russia all this was received by the wrong organ of perception not in the spirit of a scientific conviction, but as the expression of religious feeling. Thus the elements of Marxism went astray, and landed in the wrong chamber of the Russian consciousness, in the "ikon corner" of his pious heart-brain.

Consequently, the simplest objects of technology immediately became sacred religious paraphernalia and fetishes for orthodox Bolshevists, and only a small error of thought was necessary to arrive finally at an idolatrous worship of the machine itself as the fullest expression of the mechanized mastery of life.

Soon, other reasons appeared to justify the worship of the machine the life of the mass was even in earlier times closely bound up with technology, but it was in the existence of the proletarian that preoccupation with machinery had from the beginning played the most important part These machines, however, which were previously misused, merely to extend capitalistic private interests became, as soon as the masses, through the Revolution, obtained possession of them, the consummate instruments of collective interests. The machine was regarded both as the most suitable means for satisfying general needs, and as the best expression of the mechanist-collective principle, the very image of a higher order and truth

In a similar way, the "imitation of the machine" was soon elevated to a religious need, like the "imitation of Christ" of old the whole of human society should henceforward be organized on technical principles, and a corresponding change be made in all forms of life Just as pious mystics once strove to make themselves into an image of God, and finally to become absorbed in Him, so now the modern ecstatics of rationalism labour to become like the machine and finally to be absorbed into bliss in a structure of driving belts, pistons, valves, and fly-wheels People began eagerly to investigate the mechanical elements in man himself, the technical foundations of the bodily organism, which must in future be encour-

aged and religiously developed; they tried to schematize as mechanical functions all the organic movements, to arrive, finally, at the conception of every vital manifestation as a partial function of a regularly pulsing world of automata.

While the old idols were thus openly ridiculed in the " mockery processions " of the so-called " blasphemers," there arose, simultaneously with this collapse of the old faith, the new cult of the machine, accompanied by all the phenomena and ceremonial paraphernalia, the same fanaticism and the same intolerance attendant upon and characteristic of the earlier religion.

This machine-cult of the Bolsheviks seems like a fresh flaming up of that curious automaton craze which attacked philosophy and technology in Europe at the beginning of the eighteenth century. A like naive and phantastic vision now enthralls the minds of the Bolsheviks the idea that it might one day be possible to capture infinite life in purely mechanical constructions made by men, to manufacture a new man, an homunculus produced at the right hatching temperature in the revolutionary retorts; only in this case it is no longer a matter of the artificial production of a single living creature, but of a sociologically constructed, gigantic, collective human automaton, who, worked by an exactly functioning mechanism, shall replace and even surpass everything ever previously thought of as life and its highest achievements.

The erroneousness of this interpretation of the meaning of the machine is once again best understood by a comparison of the conception held by trained Western technicians of the true functions of mechanization. One of the most remarkable experts in modern technology, the German philosopher and engineer, E. Zschimmer, looks to technology for the realization of the truth prophesied by Fichte· " Gradually there should be no need for expenditure of energy on mechanical work beyond what the human body requires for its development, training, and health, and thus work should cease to be a burden, for the reasonable being is not meant to be a burden bearer "

In the opinion of Zschimmer, who is chosen as representing a whole number of similar trends of thought, technology signifies " by no means a mass murder of personality, a problem of exact natural science and national economy, deadening to man," but rather " a liberation of life," which shall rise victorious from the preliminary work on dead matter. " Not the airship, but free travel by airship," says Zschimmer, " not the machine, but the liberating accomplishment of the machine, not the technician, who is intent on the means, but the one who uses these means with a mind that looks ahead, these it is who manifest the true spirit of the technical age " The aim of technology is thus freedom, as it were, from the heaviness

of earth, the machine is only the means thereto, and technical creation, the industrial labour-system itself, is merely the means to the means In harmony with these views, almost all the champions of modern technology vigorously protest against the view that the de-intellectualization of human work is the aim of mechanical evolution.

But is not the verdict of the bourgeois West, with its " brain ravaged by idealism as by plague," on the phenomena of the present and the future, a matter of indifference to the Bolshevists? Has not the bourgeois order of the world long ago played out its part in history, and is it not already condemned to intellectual death? And, finally, was not Russia chosen from of old to bring the true redemption to mankind? Had not the " historico-materialistic natural law " entrusted the Russian proletariat with the task of showing the world the way of salvation! In the elemental upheavals of the great Revolution, the rotten structure of idealism will collapse and the new empire of the automaton arise! Soviet Russia points the way and gives the " great example " of how the life of the individual human being must become a reliable and trustworthy partial function of a completely mechanized world, a constituent part of that long dreamed-of, infallible, ever-reliable social mechanism, the " mass man "

Chapter II

LENIN

I

ALTHOUGH the idea of the paradisaical kingdom of the nameless mass was already fixed in millions of serf "souls," an anticipatory vision of the many arising out of centuries of longing, nevertheless the action of one great individual was needed for its accomplishment. A mighty historical process did, it is true, precede the Bolshevik upheaval, and yet, between that which, before the coming of Lenin, had been fermenting in the masses so powerfully that it needed only translation into word and deed to become a living reality, and that which then took shape through the word and deed of Lenin, lies an ever-mysterious something, the marvel of the individual word and the individual deed, the secret of the great personality

No other historical example, perhaps, so strikingly confirms the indispensability and wonderful uniqueness of personal greatness as the mighty historical achievement of Lenin, the man who created the empire of the impersonal mass For never was there such inseparable connection between the word and him who spoke it, the doctrine and its teacher, the deed and the man, and the movement of the mass and the example of its leader. Nothing can be detached from this personality, everything abides sure and certain in it as in a mighty cosmos Bolshevism is entirely the achievement of Lenin, understandable only through him and possible only through him Just as the history of Caesar or Napoleon is inseparable from their personality, so is Bolshevism unthinkable without Lenin, since it was supremely the achievement of an individual great man and the achievement cannot be separated from the man

In the comparison which Trotski drew between Marx and Lenin, this remark is especially significant: "The whole of Marx is in the *Communist Manifesto*, in the preface to his critique in *Kapital*," says Trotski, "even if he had never been destined to become the founder of the First International, he would remain for all time as he stands before us to-day. But Lenin, on the other hand, is wholly expressed in revolutionary action. His theoretical work is merely a

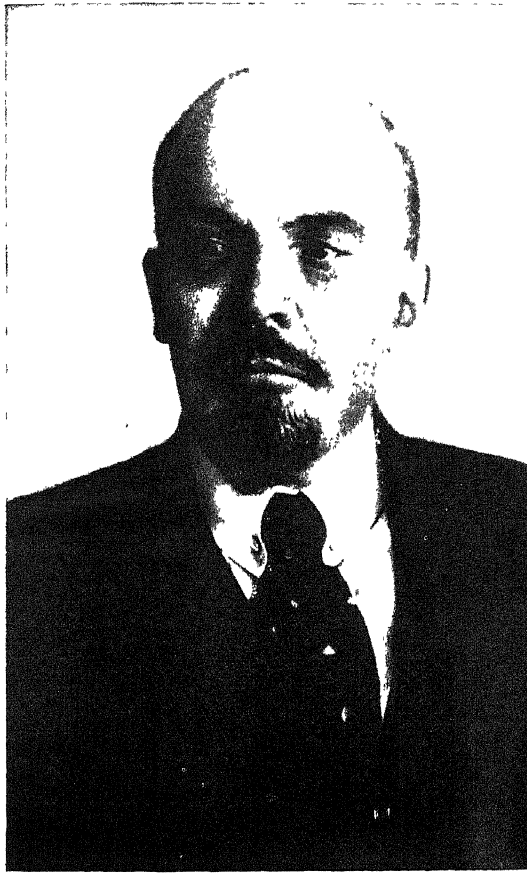
preparation for action. Had he not published a single book, he would still live in history, as he has already entered it, as the leader of the proletarian Revolution, and the creator of the Third International."

This inseparable union between the work and its master can be seen unmistakably, not only in every one of Lenin's utterances and actions, but also in all the events of Bolshevism.

When Lenin spoke, the audience heard words which had often been uttered before, or at least thought of, turns of speech which were sometimes entirely unoriginal and well worn, and which would perhaps have been utterly commonplace if it had not been he who used them, but they all received significance from his enigmatic personality, each of his simple words had an invisible power, each of his gestures was fashioned to a great historical event, whose image was to be impressed on the hearer for ever.

This magic is even felt in Lenin's writings If we read them without thinking of the personality of the author, we must describe them for the most part as written in a mediocre and not particularly logical way, and sometimes even as demagogic and flat. But the figure of the writer, which is felt behind the written word, holds the reader in thrall, compels him to let sober judgment go, and demands attention, for what is said has beyond all doubt the authority of great personality The fact that sentences which in themselves express no particularly profound thought exercise so strong and impressive an effect, speaks more convincingly than anything else for that mysterious power which dwells in personality alone.

One of Lenin's bitterest enemies, the Russian Socialist M. A. Landau-Aldanov, tells how the dictator once, in the midst of the most important State business, received an unknown workman, who came to bring him some rather trifling message. " I saw," writes Aldanov, " this workman at the moment when he returned from his audience with Lenin. He was powerfully moved, not the same man. Usually a quiet and reasonable being, he spoke all at once like a man in ecstasy ' That is a man,' he repeated over and over, ' that is a man for whom I would give my life! ... With him a new life begins for me! ... Ah, if we had had a Tsar like him! ' But what did he say to you then? ' I asked when he was a little quieter. I received only a vague reply. ' Everything belongs to you,' Lenin had said, ' everything. Take everything. The world belongs to the proletariat. But believe no one but us. The workers have no other friends. We alone are the friends of the workers.' The workman had already heard a hundred times these absurd demagogical sentences, this promise of an earthly paradise instead of a long life of want. Was it the infection of deep faith that had so excited him? Was it the magnetic influence of an outstanding personality? "



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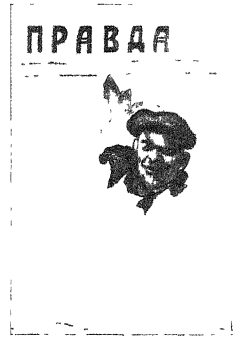
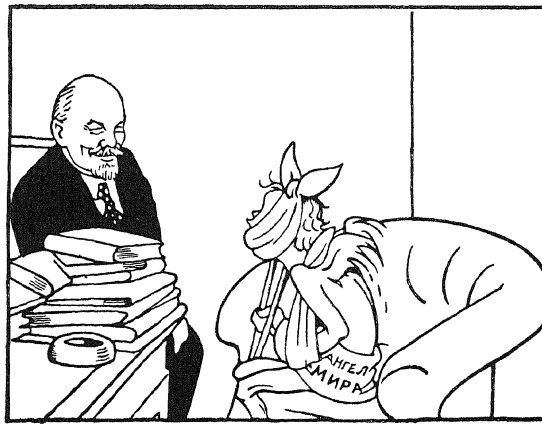


CARICATURE OF LENIN
in the Party Newspaper, " Pravda "



CARICATURE OF LENIN
by Deni
(On the winged figure, the words " Angel of Peace ")

Countless numbers hated Lenin and regarded him as Antichrist. Countless others worshipped him as the liberator of Russia. But they all, disciples as well as enemies, felt him in the same way, as a great elemental phenomenon such as occurs only once in centuries. In the love and hatred of the Russian peasants his figure immediately rose to a mystical greatness; the Russian poetess, Seifulina, tells how, even in Lenin's lifetime, legends had formed about him in the stuffy peasants' cabins of the farthest parts of Russia, as about a being from a higher, superhuman world In these descriptions of Seifulina that fascination, which the figure of Lenin exercised over the Russian peasants, appears with a lively power· " I used to hear orthodox Christians and sectarians shrieking by heart, in furious devotion, a sort of ecstasy, whole pages of the Bible, they attributed to Il'ich Lenin the number of the beast, the number of Antichrist ... But another of the sectarians, a saddler by trade, spoke in the country town in support of Lenin, with great gestures, also quoting Holy Scripture. Lenin, in his view, acted according to the Bible when he took from the wealthy their rich acres. ' Woe unto them who add house to house, field to field, so that no place remains for the rest, as though they were alone on this earth.' For this particular sectarian, Lenin was the bearer of the righteous wrath of God, who was to fulfil the prophecies of Isaiah In a settlement of orthodox believers there was a thin, red-headed man, who fanatically, and in his own words, scripturally, professed his faith in Lenin. He joined the party, slung on a rifle, brandished it threateningly at every meeting, and bellowed out scriptural texts to prove the justice of Lenin's political acts ... The stories which were current about Il'ich Lenin testified alike to admiration, and hate, and repugnance; but all were equally passionate, none was indifferent: land-hungry settlers, labourers, all this poor population wove a garland of legends about the figure of Lenin."

The whole success of Lenin, the explanation how it was possible for him, with a few hundred thousand adherents, to assume dominion over a hundred and fifty millions, is plainly due entirely to the spell of his personality, which communicated itself to all who came into touch with him, and then penetrated into the cabins of the peasants in the remotest villages. It is true that the Bolshevist system of dominion is maintained by armed power, by the terror inspired by the secret police, by espionage, and persecution; but what keeps this whole apparatus of power in motion is nothing but the force that proceeds from the great name of Lenin, the spell of his authority

Never yet, therefore, has the name of its originator been given to a creation with such complete justification as in this case. The word " Leninism " generally signifies Bolshevism in Russia to-day, and in this, the name of the leader given to the whole movement,

the true essence of the new régime is completely expressed For Bolshevism is, in content and doctrine, the achievement of Lenin, and it was the mysteriously strong personal influence that he exercised that afterwards grew and waxed to an historic influence, to the mighty upheaval, which is Bolshevism

After Lenin himself had denied the existence and value of personality, his stalwarts felt obliged to explain the uniqueness of Lenin as a mere product of historical and economic development, and they tried hard, especially the Soviet professor of history, M Pokrovski, to explain Lenin as a " special appliance," or, like a Bolshevist poet, attempted to describe him as a " greater screw " within the collective machine. However, they were not able to argue away the unique element in the existence and appearance of Lenin When Zinov'ev set himself to relate the history of the Communist Party, even he had to recognize the magnificent personal achievement of the leader. Speaking of the October Revolution and the part played by the Party in these events, Zinov'ev says that " nine-tenths of it was the work of Lenin, if in revolutionary times one may speak of a single personality at all. But if any man was able to convince the doubters, to compel the waverers to a decision, and to precipitate the fight, that man was Lenin "

And immediately after Dora Kaflan's attempt on the life of Lenin, Trotski declared " When we think that Lenin may die, our whole life seems useless and we cease to want to live " A greater and more unqualified recognition of personality, a deeper homage to its unique nature, has seldom been paid For do not these words imply an avowal that the famous " Marxian law of evolution," to which Bolshevist theory ascribes the " revolutionary achievement," was in reality nine-tenths the work of a single great individuality? And for Trotski simply to obliterate everything else, the whole of the rest of the world, in order to fill himself completely with the image of the great leader, does that not signify that the spell of Lenin's personality is of the most profoundly overwhelming character?

However one-sidedly Soviet historians may urge their claim to Lenin as a proof of their materialist dogma, they can by no means explain how his personality differed from all others, what made it " special " and greater than that of the other two hundred thousand communists, greater even than that of his whole generation. But the strength of the impression which the personal greatness of Lenin really made, even on those Bolshevists who were determined to see in him an " appliance " or a " screw," is shown by the fanatical cult of Lenin which followed his death In Bolshevist Russia, in the empire of the impersonal mass man, the man who created the doctrine of the unimportance of the individual, has been glorified as scarcely any national hero before him. The funeral procession

of the " appliance, Lenin," was a ceremony such as Russia had never before seen from the farthest districts of the realm came hosts of peasants merely to file once past the bier of the great dead, and to be able to gaze for a few moments on the face of Lenin Very soon after his death the mausoleum on the " Red Square " before the Kremlin, the last resting-place of his embalmed body, venerated like the relics of a saint, became a place of pilgrimage Hosts of men streamed unceasingly past the glass catafalque in which the dead man lay on his bier, clad in his military coat, the " Order of the Red Flag " on his breast and the right fist clenched.

And just as in former times the hearts of the saints were enclosed in golden caskets and preserved as wonder-working relics, so was enclosed in a casket and preserved as a sacred relic the most valuable part of Lenin, not his heart, but his brain

But does not all this imply an avowal that no idea and no movement can be effective without the strong driving force of a great personality? Even the Bolshevik Revolution, through which the " coming world of the impersonal mass " was to arise, needed to an overwhelming degree the achievement of the great man, needed for its system the name of an individual, just as it had need of sacred relics and a legend for the establishment of the communist world-church But it actually seemed as if Bolshevism more than any other idea required a personality, Lenin, for it could not be separated from him, it was nothing but the powerful historical effect of a mighty individuality which was used to thinking into and dealing with the brains of the mass.

2

Of course, in Lenin we are dealing with an entirely new type of historical greatness, and to understand his historical importance we must make a fundamental change in all our former views about truly eminent men. For, just as the Bolshevik world created by him is without precedent, just as everyone who wants to understand it must get rid of all his ordinary conceptions, so any understanding of the significance of Lenin also demands a complete revision of all current notions about historical greatness.

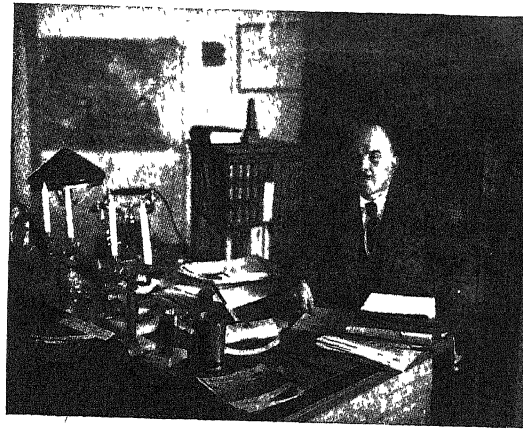
Even in the external image of this modern hero, in Lenin's whole attitude and form, the conventional gesture of the great man is lacking. His exterior was completely that of any everyday man of the mass, and clashed with all the pictures of a hero which the imagination is used to make. On the thousands of Soviet flags, propaganda pictures, emblems and badges, Lenin is now portrayed as an orator, standing on the globe, or set amid the rays of the rising sun; the man himself, however, beneath whose feet the terrestrial sphere rests as a footstool, whose face emerges from the brightness

of the sunlight, is in no way distinguished from thousands and tens of thousands of his fellow citizens He stands before us, his head covered with an ordinary cloth cap, his right hand in his trousers pocket, and we search his countenance in vain for any trace which might betray the important man Lenin had the face of an average Russian, and all his friends and disciples who had opportunity to observe him at close quarters, and all the painters and sculptors who fixed his features, are unanimous in stating that his face was entirely lacking in anything remarkable; only the little black eyes made a certain impression. The things that might strike a stranger as characteristic, the high, somewhat conical shape of the skull, the Asiatic cheek-bones, and the Mongolian eyebrows, are all quite ordinary in Russia, Lenin's physiognomy has the features which one may meet at every turn in Moscow among the many Russians from the Eastern provinces Lunacharski, Lenin's friend, disciple, and biographer, himself confesses that the dictator had the commonplace face of a merchant of peasant stock from, say, Iaroslav

But not only was there nothing remarkable in Lenin's appearance, even the first impression made by his whole manner was in no way remarkable. And yet he was a popular orator, who carried his audiences on to the most violent upheaval in history, although his speech was entirely lacking in the fiery impetus which is, as a rule, absolutely necessary to capture the masses and bend them to your will. His voice was almost always dimmed with huskiness, it generally sounded flat and colourless and his turns of speech lacked all appeal, all oratorical adornment. The style of this man, whose words put a whole continent out of joint, both in writing and speech, was entirely insignificant Trotski, the second great leader of Russia, was master of the practice of the persuasive orator, his speech had rhythm, dramatic power, and artistic structure; Lenin's oratory had none of these talents at its command

When Trotski compared Lenin to Marx, he had to mention this deficiency in the speeches of his leader: "The style of Marx is rich and splendid," he writes, "a skilful blend of strength and suppleness, wrath and irony, harshness and elegance. Marx united in his style the literary and aesthetic achievements of all preceding political literature, Lenin's literary and oratorical style, on the other hand, is simple, utilitarian, almost ascetic." Another interesting analysis of Lenin's peculiarly jejune style is found in the Left periodical, *Lev*; it is an investigation of that mode of speech which, in spite of its insignificance, resulted in one of the most important upheavals in the history of mankind. It is there pointed out that Lenin's style consisted exactly in that avoidance of the revolutionary phrase, in the substitution of simple expressions from daily life for the traditional grandiose language,

Arrival of the Royal Train at Ayr.



LENIN IN HIS STUDY

LENIN, BUKHARIN AND ZINOV'EV, THE FOUNDERS OF "BOLSHEVIK MARXISM"

" The word was not to him a profession or a career, but the right act, agitation itself is the subject of the majority of his articles and speeches. He had always on the one side opponents or enemies, and on the other the mass who had to be influenced and convinced "

While Lenin himself set not the slightest value on style, he nevertheless reacted very strongly to the language and stylistic peculiarities of others The parties were to him not only symbols of a definite philosophy of life, but also characteristic systems of oratorical expression He passionately condemned all " fine rhetoric," and regarded it as a sign of intellectual weakness and moral emptiness The fight against the revolutionary phrase runs through all his works and appeals; he rejected everything which smacked of meaningless rhetoric and literature Any high-flown sentences in his comrades called forth his angry rejection, a grand gesture roused the sharpest criticism and biting scorn; anything " poetic " or " sublime " incited him to furious outbursts of contempt

Only language taken from simple talk had value for him, and he himself used to introduce into his style ordinary, easily understood words and phrases which often had even a touch of the coarseness of popular speech. But he also loved Latin proverbs, of which he appreciated the force, terseness, and concentration Apart from these excursions into the manner of speech of the educated world, however, he spoke as simply as possible, and endeavoured as far as possible to maintain the modulation of easy conversation.

The instructions which he gave in a letter to the management of a communist paper on the proper journalistic style are characteristic of Lenin's views on this subject. " Why do you not write ten or twenty lines instead of your two or four hundred—and these as simple, easily understandable, and clear as possible—on events which have penetrated into the flesh and blood of the masses, such as the low treachery of the Menshevíks, those lackeys of the bourgeoisie, the Anglo-Japanese aggressive attempt to restore the sacred rights of Capital, the American millionaires gnashing their teeth against Germany, and other subjects of the same kind? You must speak about these, you must mention every new happening in this field, not in long articles and ' discussions ' repeated again and again, but in a few lines in ' telegraphic style '! In this way, sentence should be passed on new turns in such politics as are already known and rightly understood. Less political hair-splitting! Fewer intelligent dissertations! Get nearer to life! " Lenin was also always endeavouring to give fresh content to expression, and to free threadbare turns of speech and designations from the commonplace and stereotyped, often merely by giving special importance to

conjunctions and adverbs. He was the enemy of all introductory flourishes, and nearly always plunged into the middle of his subject.

In his polemics, as *Lev* maintains, he relied chiefly on emphasis, and when he attacked his enemies, he built up a whole system of angrily ironic interjections by which he exposed his foe to general scorn and turned the whole dispute into a kind of satiric dialogue.

In Lenin's written style, the inverted commas with which his articles swarm are highly characteristic. He loved to use his opponent's words, set them in a contemptible light, rob them of their force, as it were, strip off their shell. By preference he made an increasingly reiterated use of one and the same formula, which seemed suited to direct the attention of the public to an important point. He never appealed to emotion and imagination, but always to will and resolution; his sentences struggled with the hearer, forced him to a decision, left him no choice.

His images and comparisons were always entirely sober and simple; on the whole, he used them only to make the concrete and visible even clearer; he liked to use proverbs and easy images, especially from the Gospels and Krylov's fables; but he never quoted present-day writers.

Not only was Lenin's terse and homely language entirely lacking in all pathos, and his writings free from captivating phrases; even the content of his utterances was always directed entirely to the practical and necessary. He, who had prophesied the victory of Bolshevism twenty years before, never made great promises. His friends can point out now how, even in his book on the future state of society free from class distinctions, no trace of " exuberance " is to be found, although the theme demanded and would have excused a certain passionate exaltation. In all Lenin's utterances, sober and clearly felt practical considerations alone prevail; all his writings are dry discussions of practical politics or utilitarian instructions.

The result was that with Lenin, who had striven for the Utopian kingdom of the future, Utopia was always adjusted exclusively to the nearest momentary interests of the masses; although he had evolved the most violent programme for the overthrow of the whole world and all its century-old conditions, yet in practice he concerned himself only with the next steps which seemed to him necessary to attain his end.

In Lenin's mind every doctrine or theory, even if it were an idea which embraced the whole of humanity, always assumed the form of a directly necessary, practical demand. Therefore, even in his oratory as an agitator and his propagandist writings, he always dealt only with the tasks which must be immediately carried out.

" Lenin," wrote Trotski on one occasion, " always sings the same tune, the necessity for fundamentally altering the social differ-

LENIN SURROUNDED BY HIS CLOSEST FELLOW-WORKERS

PIECE OF POTTERY WITH LENIN'S PICTURE

ences between men, and above all the best means of attaining this end" The Bolshevist critic, Vorovski, also is of opinion that Lenin always spoke only on one and the same theme· "He deals with the same statement from the most varied and least expected angles, often ten times over He speaks like a man who has always the same idea, the idea of ideas, about which the splinters of all other thoughts revolve, like the planets round the sun The innermost core is never lost, never gives place to another thought. To live thus must in the end be very burdensome."

Thus Lenin's whole purpose was as far as possible to express the scientific content of his theory in such a way that it must be comprehensible even to the Russian peasants, uneducated and unused to political speculation, and rouse them to action Every one of his words was always aimed at its object and at direct action, and for this reason was so loaded with will-power that it was immediately of its own force translated into action Gorki remarks that Lenin's logic was as sharp as an axe His words were not only a call to battle, but also at the same time practical instructions for the conduct of the fight His motto was Revolutions must not remain on paper, they must be carried out in action He often declared that the proper execution of even the most unimportant measure was more important for the existence of Soviet Russia than all theory, more important than ten Soviet resolutions.

3

The unvarnished simplicity, this peasant rationalism, directed always towards the practical, which was manifest in Lenin's political activity, was deeply rooted in his whole nature; Lenin, the man, was as simple in his personal life as Lenin, the politician, and strove in the same way for practical ends In his private life, too, his actions and behaviour were in no way prominent; simple, without flourish, free from all superfluity, his whole mode of life was unpretentious, even ascetic.

But this asceticism, which has brought him so much posthumous fame, had no affectation about it; it was not the result of a moral principle, but rather the expression of a nature whose needs were few, the expression of a simple and resolute man, whose whole mind and will were bent on the practical and the carrying-out of principles once and for all recognized as right. Everything else not directly connected with his aims had no interest whatever for him. "It is difficult to draw his portrait," Gorki says about Lenin; "he was forthright and simple like all he said. His heroism lacked almost all external glitter. It was the modest, ascetic zeal, not seldom seen in Russia, of a revolutionary who openly believes in the possibility of

justice on earth, the heroism of a man, who for the sake of his heavy task, renounced all worldly joys "

Since he was a fanatical believer in the rightness of his ideas, he was troubled by no doubts, no attacks of despondency, or spiritual conflicts; he was exclusively occupied with realizing his projects. Therefore, even the superhuman labour, the enormous task, which he performed in order to work out and prepare his ideas and translate them into reality, was not an overstrain which could be said to have in any way twisted and distorted his compact nature, but rather the natural expansion of the immense powers possessed by this inimitable and unique being

Lenin's whole activity had the charm of harmonious freshness and ease Lunacharski states that Lenin was by no means a friend of toil, and was but rarely seen with a book, or at a desk He wrote infinitely fast in large writing and threw his articles on to paper without the least exertion, at any odd time, whenever opportunity offered. He read only in a piecemeal fashion, and never kept long to one book, but he had a sure eye for the significant, and especially for passages which he could use in fighting speeches. It was not so much ideas akin to his own, as ideas opposed to his that set him on fire, for the fighter was always alive in him, and his mind was mainly kindled in criticism. Not only did Lenin write occasional pamphlets with this calmness, speed, and objectivity, but also all those decrees which plunged half a continent into upheaval; for his measures as dictator were to him nothing but the natural expression of what he had recognized to be right, and, for this reason, had resolved to realize None of the violent and terrible conflicts in which Lenin was involved in his lifetime could disturb his calm or upset even for a moment his inner equilibrium

His friends tell us that he knew, to a degree found in perhaps few other men, the secret of complete relaxation, of the " breathing space,' and could procure for himself hours of absolute peace and gaiety, even in the midst of the most stirring events and the most strenuous work. This may explain his playing for hours with children and kittens as his family and friends describe

From the unanimous descriptions of all his friends, we see that Lenin was anything but a gloomy, reserved man Nay, we are always hearing of his childish gaiety, his care-free, jolly laugh, which seems to have been particularly characteristic " Lenin is genuine right through, filled up to the brim with the sap of life," Vorovski wrote of him. " He tries in vain to control his laughter, which when he puts his hand over his mouth, bursts out at the side."

Lunacharski also testifies to Lenin's cheerfulness in private life " In the unhappiest moments of his existence, he was serene and always prone to gay laughter, even his anger, terrible though it

could be in its effects, had something extraordinarily lovable, almost jovial, about it"

This even temperament made it possible for Lenin to preserve his calm and his prudent glance even in the most difficult and catastrophic moments of the political struggle. He was never nervous, impatient, or excited, but always uniformly attentive, interested, and objective He was always ready to listen attentively to the most trifling communications of the soldiers, workers, or peasants who came from the most remote villages to lay their grievances before him In this way, just from the simple reports of these people, he was able to understand the real cares of the masses, to know their needs and wants and think out new ways to help them He was entirely merged in the mass of his partisans, Klara Zetkin reports; he became homogeneous with them, and never by gesture or attitude tried to obtrude his personality Klara Zetkin also speaks of his comradely way with young people, and of the fatherly note he knew how to strike in his intercourse with the younger Party members.

4

There is no doubt that a large part of his success with the Russian masses may be traced to the simplicity of his character; he laid all who came to him under a spell, and he was obeyed as one obeys a trusted and experienced adviser, who is distinguished from those about him merely by greater shrewdness. Even the simplest peasant faced Lenin with a feeling that he was meeting a friend on an equal footing.

Lenin had much of the peasant in him, his simple, reliable character, his prudent eye for practical advantage, are all characteristic features of the Russian peasant. "This undoubtedly great proletarian leader," wrote Trotski once, "not only has the appearance of a peasant, but his rugged bearing as well. When he shuts his left eye in deciphering a radio-telegram or an important document, he is the very image of a shrewd peasant who is not to be got round by empty words. His shrewdness is exactly a peasant's shrewdness, but raised to the highest power and equipped with the keenest scientific methods of thought."

Lenin had in common with the peasants not only their shrewdness, but also their tendency to violence: he was intimately one with all the primitive forces of the people, and it was through this that he was able to bring about such a colossal upheaval. This basic trait of his personality explains his political success also, for he saw in politics exactly the field of activity in which his nature could best prove itself.

All his acts, speeches, and writings always breathed this simple

feeling for the practical, and also that inflexible energy which was so pre-eminently characteristic of him.

" If we take the little slips of paper," says Vorovski, " which Lenin sends out all over the place, we find in them simple instructions on, say, what attitude should be taken to England, or what advice must be given to the German workers, cheek by jowl with a request that some peasant woman or other should be allowed to take four poods of corn from one station to another, because she has three children to keep."

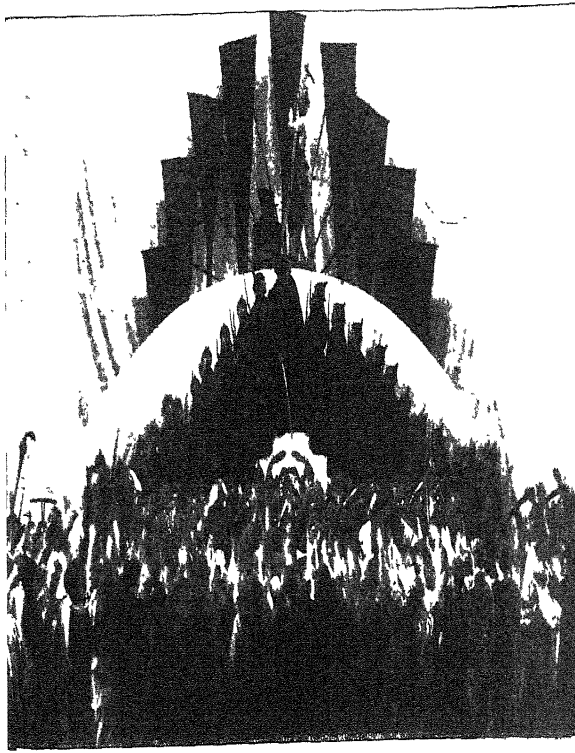
But it was just in such little everyday things, in practical activity like this, that Lenin's real strength lay. When he died and his disciples, as is customary after the death of all important men, were collecting proofs of the greatness of their master and seeking for unforgettable words, it was found that Lenin's utterances were mere dry orders, brief instructions, or official arrangements.

One of these notes, which is regarded by Leninists as " immortal," is an order which he issued in the year 1921, in the most critical period of " militant communism." The district immediately round Moscow was then threatened by the enemy, and it was generally believed that the days of Soviet dominion were numbered. In this most perilous of all moments, Lenin thought the introduction of electric light into the villages was a sufficiently important task and issued an ordinance: " The peasants in the localities of Gorki and Ziianova are immediately to be supplied with electric light! "

Another instruction of that period deals with the improvement of the radio-telephone, and the rest of the utterances of the great revolutionary have a similar ring: " Investigate immediately why the Collegium of the Central Naphtha Syndicate has assigned to the workers ten and not thirty arshin per head." " Thorough study of the scientific organization of labour necessary." " Care must be taken to make the composition of the bills laid before the Ministerial Council clearer and plainer." " Investigate how wind-motors could be utilized for lighting the villages with electricity." This is how Lenin's great utterances look; in these sentences lies the secret of the mysterious way in which Utopias can be created by means of purely practical transactions. A special commission was recently set up at the Lenin Institute in Moscow to investigate how changes of world-wide importance have in the course of time resulted from Lenin's individual and practical measures.

All the descriptions of his friends and fellow workers discover for us again and again the man whose whole attention was always given to the meticulous carrying out of everyday tasks. Even the legend which is now beginning to form around the figure of Lenin in Russia celebrates the " prudent hero of Utilitarianism "; it paints the mighty ruler of Russia who, in the midst of the most difficult

FESTIVAL TO CELEBRATE THE FRATERNISATION BETWEEN WORKERS, PEASANTS AND SOLDIERS



GRAND FINALE OF A CELEBRATION OF THE FRATERNISATION BETWEEN WORKERS PEASANTS AND SOLDIERS

affairs of world politics, bothered himself about whether the women workers in some factory or other had actually received the new aprons assigned to them The legend extols Lenin as the ruler of an immense empire, who, after sending a letter to some office under his authority, telephoned immediately himself to ask whether the document had arrived

It was this capacity for being able to think of everything at once, never to let any course of action, once begun, out of his sight again, to put the world out of joint and at the same time worry over the most trifling needs of work-women, it was this capacity that gained Lenin so many adherents. It is on account of this that, after his death, all his apparently uninteresting practical instructions were treated by the Bolsheviks as sacred words, as unforgettable utterances. Thus Lenin's note about the electrification of the villages by means of wind-mills is quoted in Russia like a text from the Gospel. It is remembered at great festivals, and from it strength is drawn for fresh struggles

Finally, Lenin's influence on the multitude is also to be explained by the fact that he succeeded Kerenski, a professed rhetorician, who loved a well-sounding phrase above all else. He appeared exactly at the moment when Russia was tired of high-flown words and longed for terse dryness, for action and deeds. The Russian mind was at that moment involved in one of its most serious crises, and Lenin was then the right man, who proclaimed deeds and practical action as the one salvation, and himself set the example. Had Lenin appeared in a Western European State, his practical principles and civilizing schemes would perhaps have roused little attention, but in Russia, utterly behind the times in modern civilization, this gospel of utilitarianism must have seemed in truth a new religion.

5

But the uniqueness of Lenin's methods and his ultimate success can only be measured if we consider how small and completely isolated his group of adherents still seemed in 1917. Even when Lenin was already the absolute monarch of Russia the Entente Press still regarded him as a " bandit," and a " German spy." It was not till he was already deranged in body and soul, and had withdrawn from public life and was wasting away, a living corpse, in the quiet sanatorium at Gorki, that Europe began slowly to recognize the importance of this extraordinary man. To-day even opponents of his doctrine must number Lenin among the strongest and most remarkable personalities in history. But the greatness of his political work in its entirety can be really understood only if it is

regarded as the continuation and crown of an historical process: for Lenin, who dug the grave of Tsarism, was, however singular it may sound, the real executor of the political testament which Peter the Great left to Russia. He himself was quite conscious of this, and often called the Tsar Peter his political ancestor. In this connection, it is interesting to note that he actually opposed any change in the name of the city of Petrograd, with the remark that Peter the Great was the first revolutionary to sit on the throne, and that his memory must be held in honour by Bolshevik revolutionaries also.

In fact, Peter the Great was the first to attempt to bridge over the yawning gulf between Russia and Western Europe, and to make his Empire into a modern, civilized State. Since then, the whole political and cultural development of Russia has stood in the sign of these "Westernizing" tendencies, which, though at first confined to the Court, later spread to the widest circles. Once Peter the Great had faced Russia with the question of deciding whether she was to follow the path of European civilization, or preserve intact her Eastern character, this problem swayed almost the whole of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Although the Tsar himself understood by Europeanization only the introduction of Western sources of power, an ever greater number of men later saw in it the one way to social liberation and release from the yoke of Asiatic despotism. Just when Alexander Herzen had clearly formulated these hopes for the first time, the opposite point of view also began to gain ground, sponsored at first by the brothers Kireevski. In the 'sixties the Russian public was already split into two great hostile camps, "Westerners" on the one side and "Slavophils" on the other. The efforts of the "Westerners" did not reach a decisive stage, however, till the moment when the Russian social democrats adopted their views, and proclaimed that Russia could be Europeanized and dovetailed into the cultural development of the West only through the proletariat. That was the first emergence of the idea that the Europeanizing of the Russian Empire was the historic task of Labour.

The opposite Slavophil tendency was at first represented by the "Narodniki," the national Socialists, but later by the social revolutionaries. Even the "Narodniki" acknowledged the necessity for a social reformation, but they wanted to carry it through without European support, entirely with the aid of the forces latent in the Russian peasantry. In their view, the Russian peasant communes actually contained the purest primitive form of socialism, thus the hopes of the Slavophils were wholly set on the Asiatic-Russian element in the peasantry.

Beginning in the 'sixties, the differences between the socialists

and the "Narodniki" became more and more acute until any alliance between the two parties became impossible; all the attempts which were then made, in spite of this fact, to bring about a union between them, proved vain.

Lenin accomplished the great work, and brought about a reconciliation between the Western and Eastern trends of thought, between country and town. In this sense, the "Republic of the Workers and Peasants," Lenin's most personal work, is much more than "mere politics," for it was nothing less than the first solution of a century-old problem.

Even the split between Lenin's section and Social Democracy, which was complete in 1903, had its cause in the different sides taken on this problem. The Mensheviks (the social-democrats) represented the view that the proletarian revolution was only possible in a country with a highly developed capitalist industrial system, in backward and semi-feudal Russia the dominion of the nobles must first be displaced by the bourgeoisie, then a strong capitalistic class must arise before the proletariat could begin to play its historic rôle. The task of the Socialists, in the Menshevik idea, must first be to support the bourgeoisie in their fight against the nobles, and thus accomplish the liberal revolution; this was the preliminary condition for the ultimate success of socialism itself. By this way of treating the question, the Mensheviks were automatically forced into a fighting alliance with the bourgeoisie, who faced West, and who were not indeed without sympathy for Socialist ideas.

Lenin had fought this Menshevik view with the utmost energy, he was of opinion that socialism must follow directly on feudal lordship, and that any alliance with the bourgeoisie was pernicious and objectionable. He was convinced that the Marxist promises were immediately realizable, and he directed his energies exclusively to adapting them to Russian conditions. In this bold sacrifice of his whole world-image to the political expediencies of the moment, as he saw them, he even rejected the inviolability of the strict Marxist creed, even this had to be exactly adapted to the momentary demands of the political situation. Lenin, the "practical Marxist," determined that this was the real essence of historic materialism, whose "dialectical" principles, in his view, pointed directly to the adaptation, as occasion required, of theory to political practice.

Lenin had made it his task to discover the forms of the class-war best suited to Russia, independently of the views of Western Social Democracy, which regarded a period of capitalism and middle-class domination as one of the main preliminary conditions for the ultimate rule of the proletariat. This conception might suit Western Europe, but it was not, in Lenin's opinion, applicable to Russia, where no adequately developed industry existed, and where, there-

fore, the road to socialism, by way of evolutionary development through concentration of capital and middle-class organization, could not be followed. The only way possible for the proletariat to attain power, Lenin was convinced, was by violent upheaval, by revolution; in no other way did it seem possible for Russia to make up for the enormous start of the highly developed industrial West.

Lenin's real work, therefore, lay in this " correction " of Marxism which, in his view, was necessary to adapt it to Russian conditions, in the establishment of a new revolutionary programme, which no longer had much in common, fundamentally, with the socialism of the West. This " Leninism " naturally had to find support in forces different from those of Western socialism, since it could not tolerate leaving the liberation of the country from its feudal overlordship to a bourgeoisie ripening for the task, but was resolved itself to carry it through immediately without their help. In contrast to the Mensheviks, Lenin thus sought his allies outside the ranks of the westward-facing intelligentsia, and, as a result, came to look for support to the Asiatic peasantry. The rural population has from earliest times formed an overwhelming majority of the inhabitants of Russia, and thus promised an infinitely stronger reserve than the numerically insignificant bourgeoisie. In alliance with the enslaved Russian peasantry, the battle would be carried on simultaneously against feudalism and the bourgeoisie, so that, after both these opponents had been finally overcome, the joint proletarian rule of workers and peasants might be established.

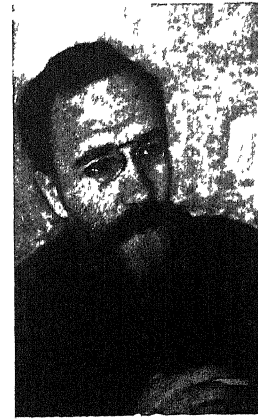
Therefore, it was Lenin's main endeavour to strengthen this alliance between peasants and workers, which he regarded as the best guarantee for the permanence of proletarian rule in Russia. This also explains the very cautious and mild way in which, as dictator, he always dealt with the peasantry, and why he wooed the favour of the rural districts, although he thereby incurred sharp criticism from his party colleagues.

Lenin, the originator and the proclaimer of the ruthless use of violence, always showed the most friendly spirit in dealing with the demands or protests of the rural population. " Lenin always held the view," says Vorovski, " that there should be no violent interference with peasant economy or the communal administration in the rural districts; and that they should rather try to train the peasants by friendly methods and through good example, for we are in many respects the pupils of the peasants and not their teachers." And because he was attempting to make the peasants the travelling companions of the Russian worker, Lenin wished to create an alliance whose foundations should be more firmly laid than those of any other association whatever. He was of opinion that the Russian proletariat is not a self-contained phenomenon of the great

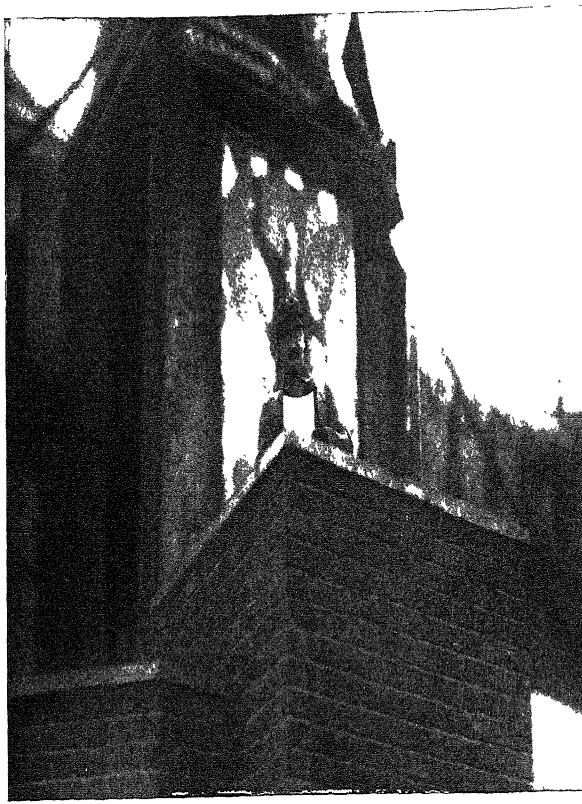
LENIN DURING HIS ILLNESS

NADEZHDA KRUPSKAYA,
LENIN'S WIDOW

KALININ



KAMENEV



TROTSKI READING AN ORDER IN FRONT OF THE KREMLIN

cities, as it is in Western Europe, but that, as it came from the peasantry, that rural past is still part of it. Therefore, the fraternal union between workers and peasants should merely define, in a political sense, the connection which, from the beginning, has existed in Russia between the factory and the country.

By the union of the urban proletariat and the rural population, Lenin actually succeeded in bringing about a compromise between the "Western" and "Slavophil" sides, and in giving a strong peasant national note to the proletarian movement. Henceforward, the communist doctrine was no longer to be exclusively the concern of the urban proletariat, but rather the concern of the whole people

Whereas, then, the endeavours at Europeanization of the Russian social democrats and the westward-facing bourgeois intelligentsia had earlier been aimed merely at a very slender section of the population, they could for the future, under the Bolshevist régime, be extended to the great masses of the peasants, and thus to the whole nation. By the inclusion of the peasantry in the proletarian revolution, the peasant himself must be proletarianized, and, therefore, at the same time "Westernized"; Lenin hoped in this way to be able to complete the historical process begun by Peter the Great. The eruptive force of the Bolshevik Revolution, however, should not only weld into a unity the Russian working class and the peasantry, but also Russia and Europe, and thus draw the old Muscovite Empire into the civilization of the rest of the world.

Not last in novelty in the achievements of this remarkable man was the fact that he immediately proceeded, with dry objectivity, to the execution of his idea, to practical proof "in conformity with the theories of historic materialism." The Bolshevik historian Pokrovski was not mistaken in pointing out that the prudence which considered only practical performance was just that which distinguished Lenin fundamentally from all former revolutionaries. while all other reformers have freely indulged in "rhetoric," Lenin was the only one who was not content with "grand words," but went on to "action."

Pokrovski extols this "practical" sense in Lenin with positively religious enthusiasm: "There was above all his enormous capacity to see to the root of things, a capacity which finally roused a sort of superstitious feeling in me. I frequently had occasion to differ from him on practical questions, but I came off badly every time; when this experience had been repeated about seven times, I ceased to dispute, and submitted to Lenin, even if logic told me that one should act otherwise. I was henceforth convinced that he understood things better, and was master of the power, denied to me, of seeing about ten feet down into the earth." Pokrovski therefore holds that Lenin can be compared only with two personalities in

recent history, Cromwell and Robespierre; but Robespierre, in the end, introduced the cult of a higher being without being influenced by any considerations but personal motives, whereas Lenin never carried out a measure except for purely objective reasons. As for Cromwell, he was only a pitiful and weak man, ruled by the crazy idea that God himself commanded his actions, from this idea alone proceeds the completely unrevolutionary spiritual constitution of the English reformer.

In this way Pokrovski arrives at the conclusion that Lenin is the only true representative of progress in the political history of mankind, and he tries to fortify this statement by numberless proofs, all these examples seem to show convincingly how little Lenin let himself be influenced by mere theories, and how strictly he always contrived to pursue only practical aims

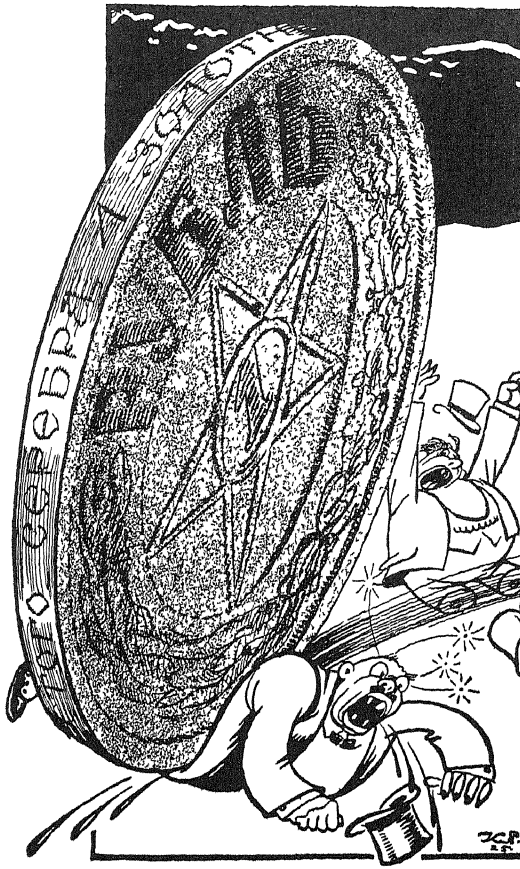
Special emphasis is naturally laid again and again on the practical significance which is inherent in the introduction of rationalistic methods of labour and organization in Russia, and also in the materialistic and collectivist culture which has been the goal of Bolshevik endeavour

Lenin's friends and partisans do not, however, see in his interest in electrification, wind-motors, and motor-ploughs the only proof of his wonderful understanding of practical problems, they rather see in his whole programme the systematic continuation of the traditional Russian policy of Europeanization with the only practical means possible at the moment Even the notion that the future of the socialist order of society should not be left to a tedious process of evolution, but adapted to the specific Russian conditions and forced on by a revolutionary upheaval, is, in the opinion of Lenin's adherents, the complete expression of a true " Realpolitik "

6

When we read such enthusiastic descriptions of Lenin's influence as are continually being advanced in Russia to-day, we feel that here certainly it is a question of the dawn of a paradisaical future, not in the form of a Utopian dream, such as all Messianic reformers have hitherto striven for, but rather the practical and tangible precipitation of the golden age

And yet never perhaps in the history of mankind has freer play been given to the Utopian arts of illusion, bedazzlement, and misdirection, and it is precisely in the work of Lenin that Utopia has surpassed itself, in its appeal to the faith of credulous humanity on behalf of wind-motors, dynamos, and automatic machinery. It is true that the scientific organization of production and human labour, the introduction of electric light into the villages, the systematic



NEP-Economics
(Caricature)

THE "CENTRAL EXECUTIVE OF THE ALL RUSSIAN PROLETARIAT" HOLDS A SESSION IN THE FORMER CORONATION ROOM OF THE MOSCOW KREMLIN

Several members are using ear-trumpets made of paper

organization of energy, are the highest expression of a rationalistic, materialistic philosophy of life, it is true that all these machines motors, and plant are the tools which rationalism uses in its practical manifestations

And yet all these things, all these wind-motors and dynamos, together with a rationalist industrial system and the psychotechnical organization of labour become phantastic Utopian visions, dissolve into symbolical forms of crazy irreality, immediately they are brought into contact with the typical Russian In Europe all these things are entirely natural, nay, everyday phenomena of economic life, since they are merely the adequate expression of a general technical development based on civilization, the appropriate working tools of the Western European But if these products of a specifically Western stage of evolution are transplanted into a world, like the Russian, where all the necessary conditions are lacking, then these tools and appliances, in themselves material and rational in the highest degree, suddenly become senseless and useless playthings in the hands of visionaries.

The romantic and phantastic nature of Russian Bolshevism is thus shown in the much extolled deviation from Western European socialism, which sees the dominance of the proletariat as the final product of a natural process of evolution in a ripening civilization However splendid Lenin's bold attempt to leap over the development of centuries, and, for " practical " reasons, to proceed directly from feudal overlordship to the dictatorship of the proletariat may seem at the first glance, a closer consideration shows that Lenin was, in truth, a visionary remote from reality, while Western socialism, although not abandoning its idealistic aims, has always represented a practical programme directed towards a definite end.

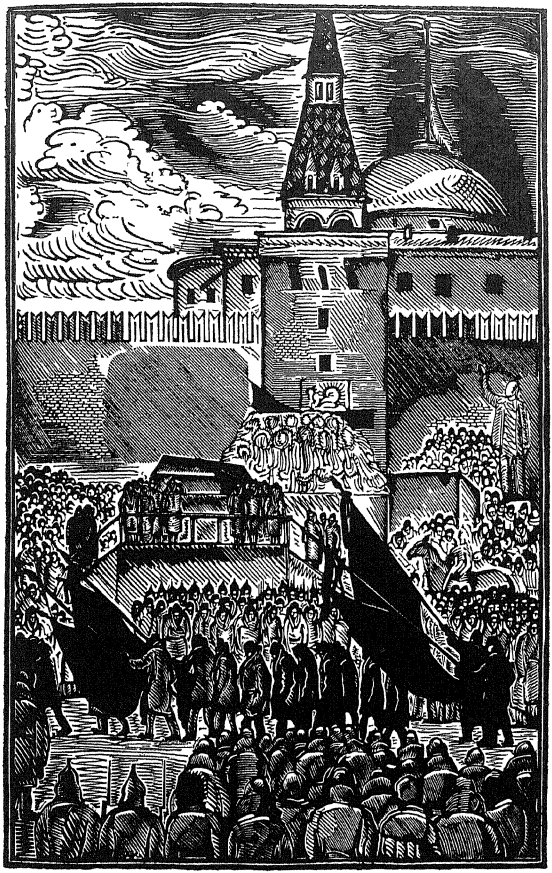
It must be admitted that this Utopia of Lenin's, which works with the ideas, " rationalism," " reality," and " systematized industrial organization," is very skilfully contrived, so that its fundamental error is not to be discerned at the first glance Lenin maintained that the practical realization, and, thus, the justification of the Marxist theory, consists precisely in the dialectical adaptation of the theory to conditions of reality, in this particular case to Russian conditions From this he inferred that Russia, in order to arrive at the ardently desired " mechanistic world of proletarian dominion," need not imitate the course of evolution followed in the West, but must go its own special way. The fallacy which is concealed in this " logical argument," and the exposure of which leads to the very opposite result from that desired by Lenin, is now plain. For an acute observer sees immediately that that statement of Marxism that the theory is only justified if it is adapted to actual reality, leads to a result which is diametrically opposed to that of the Bolsheviks; they

should have considered the undeniable fact that mechanization and technification have only in the West been conditioned by historical necessities, but not in Russia, which, being centuries behindhand, must, in the true sense of the Marxist theory, first pass through an industrial and capitalistic phase of development before ultimately arriving, by way of accumulation of capital and State capitalism, at the dominion of the proletariat. Adjustment to actual conditions should consequently have led to a recognition that economic life must first show some primitive form of organization before a comprehensive rational industrial system can be thought of, agriculture, too, could only in the course of a long period of development gradually pass from the simplest methods of work to higher forms in order finally to reach ultimate freedom from all physical burdens with the complete mechanization of labour.

This " revolutionary jerk," this " leap " over centuries, betrays the romantic Utopian spirit of Bolshevism and makes of the organic products of Western civilization, so nicely adapted to their ends, phantastic and nonsensical alien bodiesin a world which has remained essentially of the middle ages. It was from this violent grafting of two fundamentally different forms of culture on each other that there arose that entirely peculiar, extraordinary, and new phenomenon, the world of " romantic rationalism," of the " mechanical Utopia," that chain of inner contradictions which forms the least harmonious characteristic of Bolshevism in all its manifestations The more the " rationalism " and the " Realpolitik " of the Bolsheviks are emphasized, the more clearly evident becomes the romantic core of the whole phantasmagoria Lenin, the great Utopian, could, it is true, see necessity clearly, but he lacked all insight into reality, as represented by the actual conditions of the time It is in this lack of any understanding of the realities of his own time that his romanticism lies; it is here that we must seek for a solution of the extraordinary riddle of Bolshevism, for the explanation how an attempt to re-shape the world by purely practical means, in a way adapted to the end in view, could lead to results so utterly fantastic, so opposed to all common sense, so grotesquely abstruse.

7

Even Lenin's admirers and partisans, whose attitude to him was otherwise almost uncritical, could not completely ignore this great deficiency in the character of the reformer. Trotski's statements in his memoirs of Lenin are particularly noteworthy on this point. Trotski tells how, in Lenin's theses belonging to the beginning of 1918, it is several times stated that *some months were still required* before socialism could be put into full effect in Russia. " These



LENIN'S FUNERAL
(Woodcut)

LENIN'S LYING-IN-STATE

words," remarks Trotski, " seem quite incomprehensible now Has there not been a slip of the pen? Did he not mean some years or even decades? No, there is no slip of the pen; other declarations of Lenin to the same effect may be found. I remember quite clearly how, in the earliest period, Lenin often repeated to the Council of People's Commissars that we should have established socialism in six months and be the mightiest country in the world. The Left Social Revolutionaries, and not they alone, raised their heads in astonishment and perplexity and looked at each other in silence It was a system of suggestion: Lenin was teaching us all henceforward to judge everything not from the point of view of the final goal, but in the perspective of to-day and to-morrow He was using here, too, the method of sharp contrast peculiar to himself yesterday we were still speaking of socialism as the ultimate goal, to-day we must think, speak, and act in such a way that it could be realized in a few months Was this then merely pedagogic tactics? No, it was something more To pedagogic pertinacity must be added one thing, Lenin's strong idealism, his tautly braced will, which reduced the stages and compressed the course of time in this sharp change from one epoch to another He believed what he said This phantastically brief period of six months, in which he believed he could bring socialism into effect, is as characteristic of Lenin's mind as his realistic method of dealing with every worry of daily life This deep and unshakable faith in the mighty possibilities of human development, for which any price in sacrifices and sufferings could and must be paid, was always the mainspring of Lenin's thought "

This violent romanticism, this incredibly bold attempt to realize at one blow the century-long dream of his country, is what made Lenin the leader of Russia; it is the real secret of his greatness. This man, too, is of that race of dreamers which alone up to now has given humanity its great pioneers However soberly the new Gospel might preach of utilitarianism, of clean aprons, of turbo-generators and wind-motors, still it was a Gospel, an advancing epitome of a great national longing.

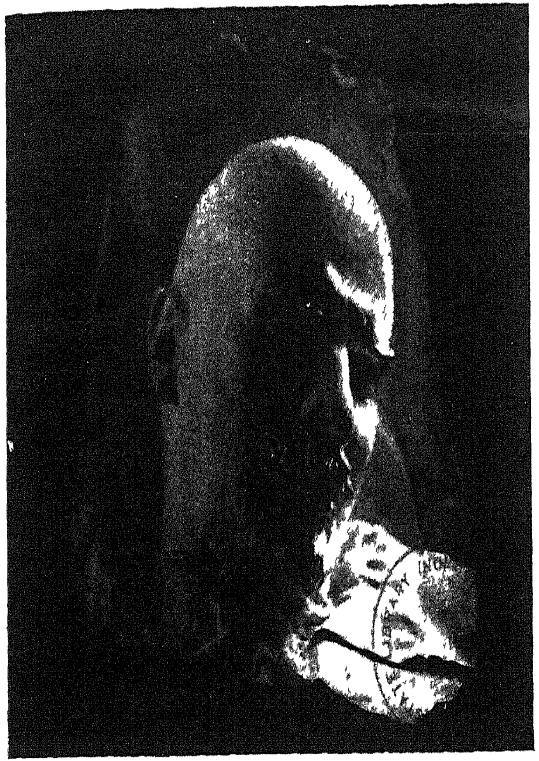
Wells, the English creator of technical Utopias, called Lenin the " dreamer of electrification," and thereby hit the nail on the head. his dream was for Lenin the starting-point of all his actions, even though the dream was a dream of technology.

When Lenin first proclaimed his teaching, the power of the Tsars seemed still unshakable. Socialism then existed only in debating and reading circles, and there was neither a true Russian proletariat nor its antipodes, a highly developed industry and a powerful capitalism. The left wing of the socialists, to which Lenin belonged, consisted of a few men who carried on the greatest part of their political activity from exile, from foreign countries or Siberian

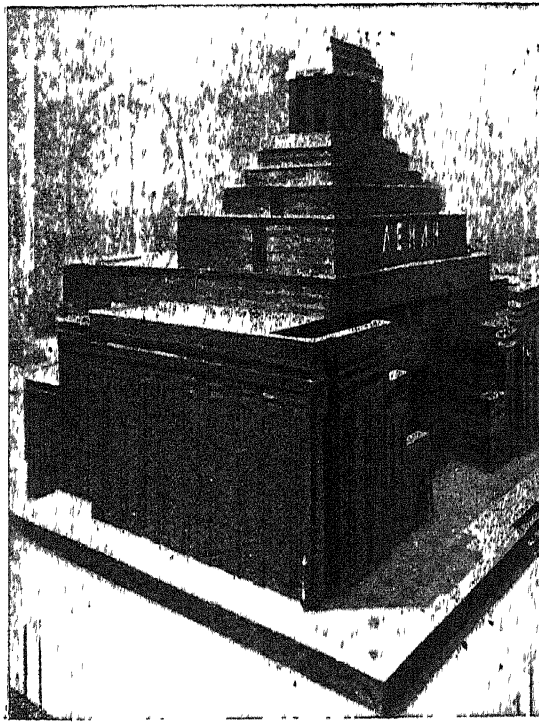
prisons. Lenin's own life alternated between Siberia and Switzerland. And yet he proclaimed the success of the social revolution and prophesied the rule of the communist proletariat in Russia with the unshakable certainty of a dreamer. Everything which he undertook then and right up to his death was inspired by this somnambulistic certainty that in a short time the communist proletariat would have won to dominion

The doctrines of modern socialism are in the main based on the theories of Karl Marx, the profound German scholar, on ideas for the understanding of which the deepest study of general scientific and economic problems is necessary. But the country in which the Russian, Lenin, set out to prove the correctness of this social and philosophic doctrine was Russia, in which an overwhelming majority of the population could neither read nor write, and was still largely at a cultural stage of the most primitive superstition Only a dreamer could have embarked on the attempt to make comprehensible to this mass of men, who believed in the miraculous power of ikons, devils, and witches, a scientific theory for the understanding of which comprehensive many-sided technical knowledge and a strictly trained mind are necessary In order to establish the chief preliminary conditions for permeating the whole population with the Marxist theories, one of Lenin's first cares as dictator was to make illiteracy a thing of the past in Russia. But here, too, he had no comprehension of the time necessary for this within a few weeks a mighty organization was to be set up for the study of modern pedagogic methods, educational institutions were to be established, courses started, and propaganda trains with school books got ready Very soon after the start of these feverish preparations, which were to lay the foundation for the Europeanization of Russia, Lenin was proclaiming with the "confidence of a clairvoyant," that by the tenth anniversary of the Soviet Republic in 1927 "illiteracy would be completely liquidated," and in the whole of Russia there would no longer be a single person unable to read or write

Before the eyes of Lenin, the dreamer, even in the earliest days of the Revolution, floated the vision of a Russia which was not only to reach the Western European level of culture and civilization, but even to surpass it. While civil war was still raging, and the Bolshevist sphere of influence was still confined to the district around Moscow, Lenin had before his eyes the electrification of the whole country down to the most remote villages. He had heard of the stupendous results achieved by the electrification of agriculture in Germany, France, and North America, besides, he saw in the lighting of the peasant villages one of the chief conditions for any cultural development. Therefore, Lenin treated electrification as one of the most urgent tasks of Soviet Russia; as early as the disturbed times



LENIN'S DEATH MASK



LENIN'S TOMB IN FRONT OF THE KREMLIN

of the civil war, in the midst of the utmost revolutionary confusion, an electrification commission was appointed, and, ever since, this problem has been a standing item on the agenda of Soviet Congresses.

In the country of waste of time, of complete apathy, among men like those depicted with such extraordinary vividness in Goncharov's novel *Oblomov*, with the aid of a bureaucracy of truly Oriental laziness, Lenin decided to create a super-American system of labour organization in which not a grain of energy should be wasted. In Russia, among Russians, he desired to organize human labour in accordance with the latest scientific methods, he established an Institute for Psychotechnical Research into Human Labour Force; he caused a " League " to be founded to utilize time down to the last second, each of his ideas, each of his attempts was a Utopia, a dream.

He died without having lived to see his hopes and aims realized, and he left the country in a state of extraordinary confusion. It is no longer Asia, and it is not yet Europe, moujik and motor-plough, Oblomov and the " Time League " are found side by side. Will the successors of the great dreamer ever succeed in bringing his dream to fulfilment, in making Utopia a reality?

Chapter III

THE PHILOSOPHY OF BOLSHEVISM

I

WHEN the Bolsheviks had created the political and economic foundations for a reformation of society in accordance with their theories, it became their concern to bring together in a system and justify by an intellectual structure all that had been attempted and realized within the framework of these theories. Men's outlook on the world, therefore, developed into an important political question, and philosophy into an affair of State, like all social and economic problems

Like the princes of the Church in old days, Lenin clearly recognized the important political background of philosophy In his opinion, adherence to the creed of materialism or of idealism was far more than the mere private business of a tiny class of philosophically trained men, he saw in the two creeds the "ideological weapons" of two classes, idealism representing a class remote from the direct process of production, materialism, on the other hand, representing the working class, which, by its very nature, aims at practical action.

Therefore, in the interest of the State, the most ruthless warfare had to be waged against idealist philosophy, a warfare which should crown the victory already won on the political and economic fields. If the epoch of "militant communism" signified a political reinforcement of the Soviet dominion, and the subsequent "new economic policy" an economic consolidation and a new organization of the conditions of production, the "ideological front" now formed against idealistic philosophy corresponded to the third and final phase of the Bolshevist struggle for dominion in Russia.

This fight against idealism seemed necessary to the Bolsheviks mainly because they suspected this philosophy of being chiefly based on a teleological unity in accordance with which, both in nature and in human life, everything advances to determined ends in a process of continual perfectibility

In such a theory of design the Bolsheviks see a "concealed religiousness," for the concept of the end presupposes the concept

of a higher being who determined this end. With equal strictness, they also rejected the so-called " immanent teleology," which speaks of a striving towards an end, indwelling in nature and society and gradually revealed, and, therefore, shifts the end, the design, to the process of evolution, here, too, a God is really at work, he is merely " washed with all the waters of thought "

All these idealo-teleological theories are, therefore, to be regarded as a reactionary misleading of humanity and deviations from the one true natural law which prevails both in nature and society, namely causality.

For causality, the causal connection between all things and events, is the general principle recognized by the Bolshevik materialists everything is, because something else preceded it, and therefore humanity advances irresistibly towards communism, because capitalist society produced the proletariat.

What divides materialists and idealists into two diametrically opposed camps is, therefore, a fundamentally different standpoint, the idealist is concerned with ultimate ends, the materialist, on the other hand, only with the causes of all phenomena.

The Bolshevik materialist thus never seeks for the end, but always for the beginning, in his view, this method is the only scientific one, because it " rejects all divinity, all supernatural powers, all the lumber of the past, and paves the way for man to become, in truth, master of the forces both of nature and of society. Causality shows us a causal objective natural law governing phenomena, quite independent of whether we desire it or not, or whether we are conscious of it or not, this causal law forms a necessary, permanent, and everywhere perceptible connection between all phenomena."

But if social conditions are dependent on causal laws alone, then the actions of every individual person too must depend on general factors From this it follows that man definitely lacks free-will, and appears in every movement and every act to be bound, subject to, and determined by, fixed laws. The doctrine of free-will is thus, likewise, merely a subtle form of religiousness, and consequently an obstacle to scientific development. From the standpoint of the materialist, the human will has in it absolutely nothing of the divine, but is always conditioned by external causes, by the state of the human and social organism.

For in the view of the Bolshevik materialists everything can be absolutely explained by natural laws, or, in a narrower sense, by physiology. All phenomena, though their complexity may at first make them seem like independent products of the spirit, are in the end seen to be rooted in material-empirical processes.

Once the Bolsheviks had proclaimed the scientific method of materialism to be the only right one, they had to treat everything

opposed to this philosophy as lies and a misguidance of humanity This applied by no means only to religion, but to all the doctrines and methods of non-materialist philosophy, they were all, therefore, treated as a great danger to the intellectual development of humanity. In idealism, in particular, the Bolsheviks saw a focus of counter-revolution, and its ruthless destruction was regarded as the most important and urgent revolutionary task

In revolutionary writing, attention is called again and again to the fact that, after all political and economic opposition to Bolshevism was broken, the spirit of reaction took refuge in idealism in order to reassert itself there History has proved that idealism has always been the watchword of reaction, but materialism, on the contrary, the basis of revolutionary thought Even the bourgeoisie, however "idealistic" their attitude may now be, championed materialism when they had to lead the fight against feudalism "Idealism is thus the last rock to which the sinking bourgeoisie cling, where they are still for a little space defiantly standing their ground"

The assumption of an autonomous soul-life or of an independent spiritual world is declared by the Bolsheviks to be inadmissible, materialism is the only justifiable and permissible creed for the revolutionary. Everything opposed to materialism is reactionary, and must be severely persecuted and exterminated, in the same way as the counter-revolution in politics and economics.

The first misleading idealistic doctrine to be attacked was Greek philosophy The Bolshevik professors at once decided that it was wrong to regard Platonism as the highest point reached by the Greek spirit, as had been the practice, this was true rather of the doctrines of Democritus. Democritus with the power of genius laid the foundations of the atomic theory, and demonstrated that the cosmos was made up of movable material particles, the ever-changing combination of which makes up the visible world Democritus, the first champion of a materialistic philosophy, was for this reason declared in Soviet Russia, almost *ex officio*, to be the only true Greek philosopher

The Bolsheviks naturally had to attack, with equal decision, that "German idealism" which assumes the "spirit" as the absolute basis of all existence, and which, therefore, in the eyes of the materialists, represents the most insidious form of religion, since there is also a religious notion in the assumption that a divine mysterious power is set over nature, a light, of which the human consciousness is a spark, a little part Of this idealistic view, it is simply stated that it is nothing but an "absurd lie," invented by philosophers of the bourgeois class to mislead men

Lenin himself analysed idealism in a somewhat more circumspect way. In a fragment found among his papers after his death, and

edited by Deborin, a teacher belonging to the " red professorate," occurs the following statement on this subject

" Philosophic idealism is not quite an absolute lie, for it springs from the same soil as materialism None the less, philosophic idealism becomes a lie, a barren bloom, if it turns to clericalism, for it makes of one of the gradations in the infinitely complicated system of knowledge, an absolute, and a fragment of reality, the whole

" Philosophical idealism, considered from the standpoint of dialectical materialism, represents a one-sided and exaggerated expansion of one of the features, one of the sides, one of the boundaries of the knowledge of the absolute, which is torn apart from matter, from nature, and deified

" The idealists, by taking a fragment of the totality of phenomena, and depriving it of its relation with matter, at the same time inflate the part to a whole, and allow it to assume absolute dimensions Dialectical materialism, on the other hand, is always conscious that such a fragment, torn from its general relation and divorced from matter, lacks all reality and is a barren blossom We therefore see in subjectivism, in subjective delusion, in that narrow-minded and one-sided attitude which takes a part of an integer for the whole integer, blows it up into a complete system, and makes it pass for the absolute, the gnoseological roots of idealism."

Bukharin, who tried to present materialist philosophy in a popular and generally comprehensible form, expresses himself much more crudely in striving to condemn philosophic idealism as counter-revolutionary and absurd

" All idealistic considerations lead in the end to a kind of conception of divinity, and are, therefore, pure nonsense in the eyes of Marxists, even Hegel saw in God the concrete form of everything good and reasonable that rules the world. the idealist theory must put everything on the shoulders of this unfortunate greybeard, who, according to the teaching of his worshippers, is perfect, and who, in addition to Adam, created fleas and harlots, murderers and lepers, hunger and misery, plague and vodka, in order to punish the very sinners whom he himself had created, and who sin in accordance with his will, in order that this comedy may be played to all eternity before the eyes of the wondering world. From the scientific standpoint, this theory leads to absurdity. The only scientific explanation of all the phenomena of the world, is supplied by materialism."

Bukharin then goes on to say that the " senseless philosophy of idealism " is refuted by every step in human experience. " When

men eat, carry on the class war, pull on their boots, pick flowers, write books or marry, it occurs to nobody to doubt the existence of the external world, and therefore the existence of the food which they consume, the boots they pull on, or the women they marry. This imbecility, however, follows from the principles of idealism If the spirit is the basis of everything, how was it before any men existed? Either we must assume the existence of a superhuman and divine spirit, such as is described in the old Hebrew fairy tales of the Bible, or we must say that the distant past is also merely a creation of our imagination The first way leads to the so-called objective idealism, which recognizes the existence of an external world independent of our consciousness, but nevertheless sees the nature of this world in a spiritual principle, in a God, a higher reason, a world-will, or some similar spook, which, in this case, takes the place of God The second way leads direct to solipsism, through subjective idealism, for which there are only spiritual beings, individual thinking subjects It is easy to see that solipsism is the most consistent form of idealism Idealism takes the spiritual principle as original and fundamental, because it believes that only our perceptions are given to us directly. But if that is so, then the existence of a block of wood is as doubtful as the existence of any man, even that of our own parents Here solipsism destroys itself and at the same time kills the whole of idealism in philosophy, since, when consistently thought out to the end, it leads to complete absurdity and absolute nonsense, which at every turn contradicts all human experience."

The Leninist materialists show equal hostility to the positivists and the adherents of Mach, that is, to the so-called " Middle Party," which " confuses materialistic and idealistic views " in every single problem In the Bolshevik view there are only two alternatives, materialism and idealism; all the " middle parties," who stand between the two extremes, play in philosophy the rôle of the lower middle-class, who lead a sham existence between the middle-class and the proletariat. Marxist materialism, therefore, regards all these shades and trends as in principle hostile to it, and decisively rejects " all mystical and idealistic deviations," " in whatsoever garment their exponents may wrap themselves "

2

The great campaign against all philosophical views unacceptable to the materialists was begun, in practice, not only by innumerable polemical writings, but chiefly by a " radical purging " of the universities. In order to protect the next generation, the communist youth, from the " spiritual poison of the old philosophy," it was

decided to make a complete reform of the universities To the Bolsheviks all idealistic doctrines were as false and dangerous as religion, their expounders must therefore be rendered harmless Many teachers of European reputation at the Russian universities, who were regarded as representing idealistic philosophy, were faced with the alternative of either leaving Russia immediately at the expense of the State, or becoming converted to the new notions of materialistic philosophy Thereupon began an emigration of the most famous philosophers to foreign countries They were immediately joined by the historians and jurists, for jurisprudence, too, might no longer be pursued as a science, since it presupposed the rights of individuals and thus was opposed to the collectivist principles of the Bolsheviks. Historical research also was suffered only in so far as it cultivated " social science."

Soon a circular was issued by the Russian " Main Committee for National Education," presided over by Nadezhda Krupskaia, Lenin's widow, which demanded the removal of a whole number of books from the public libraries. This index included the works of Kant, Plato, Schopenhauer, Herbert Spencer, Ernst Mach, Nietzsche, and many others In all, 134 books were declared to be prohibited in this circular, and in addition 94 authors were included whose complete works had to be removed from the libraries. Further, it was left to the discretion of the individual provincial officials to ban other books in their collections as dangerous.

But even the exact sciences could be suffered only under strict communist control, for fear that one or other result might creep into their experimental researches which might permit of arguments for the existence and sway of a spiritual world A professor who made the attempt to draw idealistic deductions from his experiments was, on the alleged " tumultuous demand of his audience," immediately punished and declared to have forfeited his *venia legendi*.

But how extraordinary this " spiritual dictatorship of materialism " really is can only be understood by a somewhat closer study of the past history of Bolshevism. This same party which to-day pitilessly and ruthlessly fights any form of idealism, not so very long ago itself championed idealistic principles against the materialism of its antagonists. Formerly, the spiritual leader of the Bolsheviks was Bogdanov, whose works even to-day are widely read and appreciated by the Russian workers. At the end of 1905 he was fighting to the death against the materialism which then, as represented by Plekhanov and his pupils, Axelrod and Deborin, formed the creed of the Mensheviks. At that time the most furious attacks of the Bolsheviks were directed precisely against Plekhanov's materialistic view of life, while they themselves were entirely " idealistic," even in part " fideistic." Both the " empirio-criticism "

championed by Lunacharski at that time, and the "empiriomonism" of Bogdanov were based on Mach and Avenadius, and this doctrine of perceptive knowledge was held to contain the elements of a serviceable proletarian cosmology

But pure materialism was then exclusively the creed of the opposed Menshevik section This ideological hostility between the materialist Mensheviks and the idealist Bolsheviks lasted for the whole period of Russian reaction, and was only to be changed later through the intervention of Lenin The latter was then living in Paris, had made an extensive study of law, but had till then taken almost no interest in philosophical problems Now he was suddenly asked for his verdict in this ideological dispute. He went to London, and there pursued philosophical studies ostensibly for two years, but actually, if his other tasks of that period are taken into account, for only six weeks. He then wrote a book, in which he gave his decision in favour of the materialistic philosophy which had till then been championed by his Menshevik opponent, Plekhanov Bogdanov's idealism seemed to him unsuited to practical class war, and this was quite enough to sway his verdict against it The Socialist, Landau-Aldanov, a political opponent of the Bolsheviks, makes the following quite just remarks about Lenin's philosophical studies·

"It is clear that Lenin was interested in philosophy only as one is interested in an enemy. He had studied a pile of philosophical books, or rather had glanced through them, but he was inspired by the same motives which made German officers study the Russian language."

In fact, it was only the practical, polemical side that attracted Lenin's interest, and this also explains the unwonted note always struck by his own work in this field: he is continually breaking off his discussions to hurl furious insults at his opponents and a hail of malicious and caustic wit

That those who slavishly aped Lenin, as always, imitated also this new and curious method of carrying on philosophical polemics, and even exaggerated it, need give no further cause for astonishment Bukharin and the other interpreters of Lenin's philosophical views, in time confined themselves more and more to "deciding" the most difficult problems of thought and natural science in favour of the materialistic viewpoint, by disposing of the views of their opponent with the simple remark that they were "nonsense," "imbecility," "gammon," or "malicious misguidance."

After Lenin had spoken his mighty word, in the dispute between Mensheviks and Bolsheviks, in favour of materialism, all his imitators

immediately began to make the most violent attacks on Bogdanov's doctrines, which had hitherto been regarded as the only true ones, and eventually they drove him out of the Bolshevist party While they were thus banishing one of their doughtiest members they found new friends in the enemy's camp, chief of whom were Axelrod and Deborin, who, with Plekhanov, were counted among the most important representatives of Menshevik materialism. These did not actually join the Communist Party, but a sort of agreement was come to, by which they for the present did the actual " ideological work " for Bolshevism, held courses at the University, and in return enjoyed certain privileges

But a considerable time had still to elapse before the inner change in Bolshevism found a chance of making itself externally felt Up to the outbreak of the world war the Party had led only a semblance of life, and later even, at the time of the February Revolution, it had to devote its whole attention to purely political matters. It was not till October 1917, when the Bolshevist side became master in the new State, that it was at last possible to make a clear definitive statement of the ideological point of view of the Bolsheviks This time the problem was " decided " by order of the State in Lenin's sense, that is, in favour of dialectical materialism. The treatise which Lenin had published on the idealo-materialist dispute was reissued, and with all due form elevated to the position of the Bolshevik State religion

3

Henceforward, therefore, " dialectical materialism " was to form the philosophical justification of the new Bolshevik view of life, albeit in a specific Russian interpretation, which by no means agreed in all points with the views of Western European materialists, and which, for that reason, especially as it appears in the writings of Lenin and his commentator Deborin, must be treated in somewhat greater detail

In the view of these Bolshevik materialists nature existed first, from it life proceeded later, and from this, finally, thought Thus the mind is nothing but a fixed organizational form of matter, and psychic phenomena and consciousness, too, are qualities, " functions," of matter organized in a certain way. Therefore, the mind, even in its highest manifestations, represents merely the result of a very long development of matter, from which it follows that it is not matter that is " chained " to mind, but that the reverse is true, mind belongs to matter. In this conception, then, the reason is only " an insignificant part of nature," one of its evolved products, an expression of its processes.

The materialists, declares Deborin, might also point out that it is

proved that the earth existed for a period during which there were not and could not have been any men or any living beings whatsoever on it. Organized matter was a later phenomenon and the fruit of a long process of evolution The existence of the " reflected independently of the reflector," the existence of the external world independently of the perception, is, according to Lenin, the fundamental premiss of materialism " The assertion of natural science that the earth existed before men is an objective truth " This objective reality, external to and independent of all consciousness of any kind, is also the source of everything spiritual If, as the natural sciences show, the world existed before consciousness, this means that it is primary, while consciousness or reason is something generated and secondary " If it is proved that there is no thought without a brain, then thought is the product of highly organized matter "

In views of this kind Bolshevik scholars received especial reinforcement from the new work of the world-famous Petersburg physiologist, I P Pavlov, which had just appeared. His remarkable researches into " conditioned " and " unconditioned " reflexes and their relation to the development of thought were about to cause a revolution in psychology, as long before the " Pavlov dog " had been a nine days' wonder in the whole medical world

The fact that Pavlov's " conditioned reflexes " seem to demonstrate the transition from purely physiological automatism to associations of ideas and primitive forms of thought, was utilized by the Bolsheviks in the most grotesquely exaggerated way in order to represent that all spirituality whatever, even in its highest forms, art and science, is an expression of mere mechanism, as it were the output of a more or less complicated factory. Whether Pavlov himself held or expressed such materialistic-metaphysical views is in the highest degree doubtful, it is generally known that, by political conviction, he was anything but a Bolshevik. He, a great investigator and thinker, was certainly no stranger to Du Bois-Reymond's famous *Ignorabimus*, in his address " On the Limits of Our Knowledge of Nature "

The conception that all mental activity is merely a combination of material, physiological conditions was finally and completely superseded in Western Europe as early as the 'sixties, and the well-known statement of Karl Vogt that thoughts were related to the brain " as the liver to the gall or the urine to the kidneys," was even then recognized in its complete banal superficiality. Moreover, there can be no question of the possibility of there being, as the predecessors of John Stuart Mill had taught in the eighteenth century, any causal connection between physiological mechanism, or any molecular mechanism whatever, and psychical conditions of any

kind, even though the presence of an exact parallelism between the two may be undeniable This psycho-physical parallelism does indeed form the real problem which the greatest brains of all time have so far struggled in vain to solve.

Untroubled by all these subtle considerations, and influenced entirely by the political point of view, the Bolsheviks now declare dictatorially, not only that such a causal nexus exists, but further that all intellectual phenomena are plainly identical with the physiological mechanism, and that nothing psychical or intellectual really exists. Thus, if it is regarded as proved that every expression of the human spirit, emotion, or thought is in the last resort to be traced to purely material, physiological, mechanical causes, it follows immediately that all apparently autonomous intellectual phenomena must be fundamentally of a material nature

This conclusion bears, not only on the individual personality, but also on society as a whole, which can be regarded merely as an aggregate of many individuals, as a complex system of beings acting on each other. Just as all the thought and feeling of the individual is traced back to material causes, so society in all its manifestations is referred to materialistic principles. According to this conception, all the phenomena of social life, religion, science, art, philosophy, and all other forms of culture and civilization, are merely a " higher organizational form of matter."

4

The Bolsheviks accordingly protest against the " heresy " that any kind of intellectual culture can be conceived of apart from the economic premisses of society; so that for them this proposition is valid: that everything intellectual is merely a " function of social matter," for the material conditions of human existence are always the sole basis of the intellectual, and thus every form of social life is conditioned by its economic structure. It must be noted in this connection that Bolshevik materialism understands by " society " no psychically animated whole, but a collectivism of labour, that is, the form of production of the moment. All forms of society and of alleged " intellectuality " are merely a " superstructure " on an economic foundation. In this system of the " superstructure," social, political, philosophical, technical, and economic phenomena are bound together by the closest causal connection.

This doctrine of the " superstructure," which is fundamental and important for the whole of Bolshevism, is, according to Russian assertions, mainly derived from Karl Marx; it further appears in Engels' attack on Dühring, not least in a letter which Engels wrote to Franz Mehny in 1895.

Marx himself in his work, *Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*,

observes on this subject: "In the social production of his life, man enters into determined necessary relations independent of his will, production relations which correspond to a certain stage of development in his material productive forces The totality of these production relations forms the economic structure of society, the real basis on which a juridical and political superstructure is raised, and to which certain juridical forms of consciousness correspond. The method of production in the material life chiefly conditions the social, political, and intellectual vital process It is not the consciousness of man that determines his existence, but, on the contrary, his social existence that determines his consciousness"

In accordance with this statement, the Bolsheviks see in all ideology the systematization of delicate material consequences manifested in moral standards as thoughts, feelings, or rules of conduct In their view, this connection between economic foundations and the ideological "superstructure" is most clearly seen in religion There the faith in the miraculous, the conception of the "mind" and of the "soul," are nothing but the image of the economic structure of society at the time when the division of labour had led to the creation of organization, administrative activity, and other special functions In the opinion of the Russian materialists, the further development of religion clearly shows the change in productive and socio-political relations running parallel with it: "The Church reproduced and repeated in its midst at every stage merely the society of the time in its economic features" Ethics, too, is to be regarded as dependent solely on national economy and technology. All ethical demands are, in their view, always closely linked up with the class or the group and their economic position: ethical rules signify merely the guiding lines for the behaviour of the society or class, obedience to which best secures their economic interests The philosophy which springs from the contemplation of general problems is also nothing but a generalization and systematization of all other fragmentary knowledge of nature from the standpoint of subsuming all knowledge in an ordered world. Although it thus forms the most complex type of refined matter, it has nevertheless an earthly and physical origin, and its ultimate dependence on the technical development of society and the level of the productive forces is clearly to be seen.

Hence, philosophy is by no means to be regarded as a purely mental phenomenon, it represents rather a magnitude standing in a functional relation to the changes in economy and technology The same is true of social psychology and ideology, since society itself is dependent on the economic and technical conditions of its time. Even science results from practice and from the conditions and needs of society in its struggle against nature or other social groups.

Just as society in its directly material productive activity (something after Ernst Kapp's " Principles of a Philosophy of Technology " and his " Projection of the Organ ") " extends " its natural human organs, in order to be able to work up a greater mass of matter with the help of technology, in the same way human society in science " enlarges " its consciousness, thereby extends the scope of its view, and includes a greater number of phenomena in its comprehension In order that science may be able to exist at all, the productive forces must have reached a certain stage of development, for science can only live on the product of surplus work and is unthinkable where no such surplus exists. Hence, it is either the reflection of a mode of thought with which the class corresponding to it is imbued, or the reflex of the economic interests of this class, but the mode of thought and the interests themselves are in their turn determined by the economic and social structure

5

It is only a further logical step on a road already struck out for the materialists, to conceive art itself as a product of economic relations Its connection with the material basis can be quite clearly recognized; it, too, is only a systematization of the feelings corresponding from time to time with its class, by means of words, notes, motions, or colours. Further, art can also be regarded, in Bukharin's words, as " a means for the socialization of emotion," or as Tolstoi formulated it, " as a means to the emotional infection of humanity." Listening to a piece of music of a certain emotional content " infects " the audience with a common sensation; the soul-state, the feelings, are " socialized " by the music. The same thing takes place not only in music, but, with the necessary modifications, in all the other arts: they all form merely a socialization of the emotions, a means for transmitting and disseminating them

All forms and every kind of style are determined by the conditions of social life, for style is an embodiment of the prevailing psychology and ideology of society, not an external form, but a " plastic content with the appropriate visible symbols." Besides, style is to a high degree determined by the material conditions of its epoch, somewhat as musical style depends on the stage of evolution of the instruments

The content of art is thus in the last resort governed by the laws of social evolution, this content is, therefore, a function of social economy, and at the same time a function of the productive forces, and finally, therefore, even if the connection is not here so apparent, a derivative of social technique.

The most general " ideological forms of the superstructure," language and thought, are also in a similar state of functional depend-

ence on social development. In contrast to the Western socialists, especially to Kautsky, who regards the origin of language and the capacity for thought as outside all connection with historic materialism, and holds them to be constant, the Communists believe that speech and thought are also only a kind of "superstructure," and depend, by origin and nature, like all other phenomena of social life, on the economic and technical evolution of humanity The process of thought itself and all its forms are, according to this conception, variable quantities, which are in all respects bound up with society, its organization of labour, and its "technical backbone." All these forms of expression of the "superstructure" developed in accordance with the development of the productive forces, and were transformed from a "world as such" into a "world for men," from simple matter into material for human use With the help of tools, at first crude, but becoming ever more delicate, supplied by material labour and scientific knowledge with the countless feelers of machines, telescopes, and thought, society subdued an ever greater part of the external world, and this world around is revealed to society by work and in perception. In this way, a great many new ideas and new words arise, an enrichment of language takes place, which embraces everything of which men think and which they communicate to each other The "ideological superstructure" is thus always produced by economic relations and the productive forces, which determine these relations, but are also influenced by them They react continually on the economic basis as well as on the position of the productive forces In other words, between the various ranks of social phenomena a continual process of reciprocal action takes place. Cause and effect change places

Just as in the view of the Bolsheviks, on the one hand, nothing proceeds from the mind and even the highest intellectual phenomena rest entirely on causality, in the same way science must consequently also have a practical significance and aim at the direct realization of utility. Professor Timiriazev, one of the champions of dialectical materialism, distinguishes three phases in every true "Marxist" science. empiricism, the practical application of the evidence gained by empiricism, and finally the logical systematization of all discoveries. If this systematization by logic cannot be made the basis for fresh empirical investigations, then it is a dead point in the scientific process of thought. Therefore, declares Timiriazev, every piece of scientific research and achievement must be weighed and evaluated from the point of view of how far it is technically and practically applicable

Only a philosophy which aims at concrete, useful results can claim to be regarded as serious science and to form a basis for further research. Hence every scientific effort which is not based on empiri-

cism, on the one hand, and of which no practical use can be made, on the other, is mere useless imaginative trifling Timiriazev points to the appreciation and application of the sciences in America as to an ideal to be striven after there research and technical production go hand in hand, there, in his opinion, in the laboratories of the great industrial works, the true new science will be born.

" Science," he declares categorically, " cannot be detached from economic life. Every investigation must be conducted in such a way as to take into account the applicability of the results to technology This practical science, by its purely mechanical manifestations, gives fresh occasion for further scientific research The first principles are empiric, from their application results the logical systematizing, and from it again results further empirical acquisitions."

The conclusion of all this is that matter is thus " the sole philosophical category for determining objective reality, which is given to man in his sensations, which is reproduced, photographed, and reflected in our perceptions, and which exists independently of these. Therefore, any assertion that such a conception could become out-of-date is immature chatter, the repetition of which is the proof of a modern reactionary philosophy "

6

Deborin, Lenin's commentator, gives an explanation of what the materialists understand by objective truth. he emphasizes the sharp contrast between Lenin's definition and that of the metaphysical absolutists or objectivists, who regard the world as something finished, given once for all, single and unalterable, and assume a truth recognized for all time In Lenin's view, on the other hand, our sensations are, it is true, the images of the sole and final objective truth, but not in the sense that this truth itself is recognized for all time, but in the sense that there is and can be no other truth beside it. " Nevertheless an all-embracing, once and for all conclusive system of knowledge of nature and history is opposed to the fundamental laws of all dialectical thought."

Deborin points out again and again that the materialists accept perceptions of truth not from a fixed, but rather from a dialectically mobile, point of view. " For how," asks Deborin, " could Lenin, this ever-forward urging, all-destroying revolutionary, recognize a finished and petrified world? Had he not to burn this world in the fires of revolution in order to create a new and better place? The development of science offers new possibilities, new horizons, and wide perspectives. If this world does not change in accordance with its own laws, then it certainly could not be set in motion by any external force. But, relying on these laws of change and development

to which it is itself subject, we are able, by submitting to those laws and working in the same direction, to hasten the pace of evolution, and to take a share in this cosmic process "

But although knowledge is in a state of progressive evolution, this fact in no way leads to the conclusion of the metaphysical relativists, that the external world has no existence The materialist is thus in the most decisive opposition to the relativist, for " to make relativism the basis of a theory of knowledge," says Deborin, " implies a confession of absolute scepticism, agnosticism, sophistry, or subjectivism Relativism as the basis of a theory of knowledge is not merely the recognition of the relativity of our knowledge, but rather the denial of any objective measure or standard, which exists independent of man and to which our knowledge approaches By the aid of a stark relativity one could make out a case for any form of sophistry and treat it as ' conditioned,' say, whether Napoleon died on 5th May 1821 or not, or, side by side with scientific ideology, one might admit, for pure convenience, a religious ideology, which is in many respects very convenient " From the entire character of this materialistic theory it follows directly that its rightness can and must be proved by practice alone " The idealist philosopher," says Feuerbach, " puts and decides the question of objectivity and subjectivity from a purely theoretical standpoint " For the materialist, on the other hand, practical actuality is alone the criterion of every theoretical result " Man must prove the rightness of his thought in practice " Only a theory which abides the test of real life can be regarded and accepted as objective truth

" Life, practice," says Lenin, " is the basic angle from which the theory of knowledge must be treated It leads inevitably to materialism, by driving out the endless tomfooleries of philosophical scholasticism at the very threshold. It is true that it must not be forgotten that the criterion of practice can never completely confirm or reject any human conception. This criterion is itself also so far ' undetermined ' that it does not permit of the turning of human knowledge into the ' absolute ', but it is at the same time so ' undetermined ' that it leads to a ruthless fight against all varieties of idealism and agnosticism If that which confirms our practice is the only final objective truth, there follows from this the perception that that science which represents the materialist point of view is the only road that leads to this truth. . . . The idea that everything is merely an approach nearer to objective truth is the right and profound Marxist interpretation of the whole question. By the road of Marxist theory we shall approach ever nearer and nearer to objective truth without ever exhausting it. Therefore, the theory of Marx is objective truth. What is confirmed by Marxist practice, both in the purely theoretical and also in the social sphere, is the only objective

truth To-day communism, or its elementary form, socialism, is objective truth for Marxists Therefore, parliamentarianism, formal democracy, and the State in general are relativities, stages, and means to approaching socialism proper Parallel with this, the contrast between formal apparent equality and the reality, wage-slavery, will open the eyes of the mass, which has lived through this historical experience and all its attendant sufferings In the course of historic evolution, the masses arrive at a knowledge of the temporal limitation of all these forms, and, by means of objective economic development, which reveals and sharpens all contrasts, draws nearer to socialism as the objective truth "

For the Marxists, society is above all the object of the fundamental experiment; social evolution is to prove the truth of their theories " Philosophers," says Marx, " have merely interpreted the world in various ways, the really important thing is to change it " For this reason Lenin, as a zealous partisan of Marxism, resolved especially to endeavour not only to know the world, but to reform it, to transform theory into practice. The theoretical knowledge of the necessity for freeing the proletariat must not merely, according to this doctrine, maintain a dispassionate attitude to reality; it must before everything itself lead to a change of this reality

But if, on the one hand, according to this view, theory is valuable only if it can be practically realized, practice must also, on the other hand, be always derived from theory. Lenin, therefore, asserts Deborin was no simple practical revolutionary, no mere empiricist, his activity had nothing in common with " popular bourgeois practicality " " The practical empiricist deals, so to speak, with each case as it crops up He does not see phenomena as a whole, their inner relation, and their obedience to laws The revolutionary thinker, on the other hand, does not rest content with the casual fact, he is not satisfied with the surface of phenomena, but endeavours to base his activity on the real essence of phenomena, on their laws. The laws of society are its inner motives and levers, and the ceaseless changes and developments in reality are accomplished in accordance with these inner laws Humanity has been blind and wandered in darkness for so long that these laws have become mysteries, but its sight will be restored as soon as it recognizes them. . . Without a right and objectively true theory, there is no rationally conscious historic and social activity. Such a theory is an indispensable condition for any conscious influencing of the historical process."

7

What then is this indispensable theory, without which no real insight into any historical or causal event is held to be possible? It is

dialectic, the fundamental method of thought, on which Lenin and his disciples tried to base not only all social theories, but the natural sciences as well; the doctrine of which Lenin once said that it shows " how opposites can be and actually are identical, under what conditions they are transformed into each other and become identical, and why human reason must regard these opposites not as dead and fixed, but as vital, conditioned, movable, and in process of transformation into one another "

Dialectic, in accordance with this theory, sees in this identity of opposites, the *coincidentia oppositorum* of the scholastics, the fundamental law of the world, quite on the lines of Hegel's thesis that " all things in themselves are contradictory " " If everything in the world were identical with itself," says Deborin, " there would be no change and no evolution, the fundamental law of nature is motion " But motion is the transformation of one form into another, the perpetual transition of one thing into the other, the entire development of the world depends on the eternal metamorphosis of one form or phenomenon into another. The course of variation, the evolutionary process, is accomplished by means of the transformation of opposites These opposites, however, are contained in unity, and proceed from a division of this unity " The condition precedent to any knowledge of the processes of the world in its ' automatic motion,' in its spontaneous development, in its vital being is," according to Lenin, " to conceive of them as a unity of opposites," for evolution means " struggle of opposites "

Lenin distinguishes two conceptions of evolution one sees in it nothing but a waning and waxing, a recurrence This method is " lifeless, dead, and arid " The other view, on the contrary, sees the basis of evolution " in the unity of opposites and in the division of this unity."

This method of presentation alone can afford " a key to the understanding of the automatic movement of everything that exists," since everything is moved " by the force of its inner contradictions." The processes of nature and history are to be thought of exclusively as this dialectical automatic movement, or, as Deborin expresses it in Lenin's sense, " as a discovery and a struggle of the opposites within the limits of their connection and their unity "

A posthumous fragment of Lenin dealing with dialectic contains, in addition to interesting notes on Heraclitus, Aristotle, Philo, and Hegel, a sort of tabular comparison of the sciences in their relation to this dialectical " struggle of opposites " Dialectic is seen

In mathematics:	+ and −. Differential and integral
In mechanics.	Action and reaction
In physics.	Positive and negative electricity.

In chemistry	Association and dissociation of atoms
In social science	The class-war

This tabular statement is intended to prove that all the sciences, the natural sciences no less than those of social life, are fundamentally dialectical and proceed from dialectical opposites

His disciples see one of Lenin's greatest achievements precisely in this application of the methods of dialectical materialism to all problems of national economy, politics, and diplomacy the raising of the social sciences to the level of an exact theory, and the transformation of politics itself into a science.

8

But if dialectical materialism sets up to be a scientific method, it also must find confirmation in the exact natural sciences Engels had already declared that nature was the touchstone for dialectic, and that the materialist must be grateful to the natural sciences, which every day afforded new material for testing his theory. Lenin adopted this view, and tried to find the necessary confirmation of his philosophical theories in modern physics

" Modern physics," he says in one of his writings, " is in travail It is bringing dialectical materialism to birth " But at this stage the wish was father to the thought, for the Bolshevist materialists had soon to acknowledge that modern physics, in opposition to Lenin's hope, was bringing to light an ever-increasing number of " peculiar phenomena " which supported the " idealistic conception " rather than ostensibly Marxist dogmas. It was exactly as if, from day to day, more of the hated idealism was forcing its way into the experiments of the exact sciences The great work of Einstein, in particular, which gave a new mathematical foundation to cosmogony, and traced the cosmos ultimately back to idealist constructions, was a thorn in the flesh of the materialists But it was not long before they devised a method of disposing of Einstein's theories as unscientific and arbitrary imaginings.

Lenin tried to eliminate all the inconsistencies between the latest results of the natural sciences and the Bolshevik theories, by making a sharp distinction between philosophic truth and the results of special researches. He now declared that one must contrive to divide and distinguish philosophical categories from physical and all other categories In this view, matter is " objective reality which is reflected in our sensations " The physical conception of matter gives us a relative picture of this objective reality. All the doctrines of physics are mere approximations to this objective reality, they change continually, in dependence on the results of human know-

ledge, therefore we must make a strict distinction between philosophical contemplation of, and the doctrines of physics on, matter "Of all the professors" is how Lenin puts it, "who are competent to do valuable work in the special fields of chemistry, physics, or history, we cannot believe a single word of any one of them, when philosophy is in question"

It is to be the task of the Marxists to utilize and elaborate "the discoveries of these sordid souls," that is, the bourgeois scholars, to rid them of their reactionary tendency and make them of service to the Marxist system. But, in order to be qualified for this task, it is necessary that Marxists should have a suitably grounded materialistic training, to protect them from the danger of being led astray by the new results of the exact sciences towards "physical or physiological idealism." The defect of the bourgeois specialists is, in Lenin's opinion, their confusion of detailed knowledge and "objective truth" Modern physics has strayed into the wrong paths because it is ignorant of dialectic, it has seen, in every given stage of development in science, the complete reflection of objective reality, and has thus arrived at a false metaphysical valuation of reality and knowledge "The physicists, by denying the immutability of the elements so far known and the constancy of the attributes of matter, have gone so far astray as to deny matter itself, and, therefore, the objective reality of the physical world. By disputing the absolute character of the most important and fundamental knowledge, they have been led astray to deny all objective order in nature itself, and to declare the law of nature to be a simple limitation, a restricted expectation, or a logical necessity"

Lenin calls the idealistic conclusions drawn from the results of modern physics errors of thought, and this is also the reason why he waged an equally vigorous war against the idealistic physicists· "The minority of modern physicists, under the influence of the great discoveries of recent years, by the effect of a crisis which has shown, in a particularly striking way, the relativity of our knowledge, and finally on account of their ignorance of dialectic, have arrived at idealistic views The modern physical idealism of our day is, however, just as reactionary and will have as brief a life as the modern physiological idealism of the recent past The essence of physical idealism consists in the denial of all objective reality given to us in our sensations, which is also reflected in our scientific theories. Every branch of science is to a certain extent one-sided, and expresses merely an abstraction, a deviation from concrete reality. If the scholar or the investigator forgets this, if he regards his abstractions as concrete reality, and puts both on an equality with each other, then he is inevitably led astray Ignorance of dialectic results in the severing of relative truths from objective reality It is true that this

physical idealism is not found in modern natural science as a whole, but only in one of its aspects, physics "

But philosophical idealism prefers to base itself on physics, hence there results a certain alliance between reactionary currents in philosophy and idealistic tendencies in physics In contradistinction to the one true experimental physics, idealistic, mathematical physics concerns itself with formulae and differential equations which take the place of substances or physical elements These abstractions and mathematical equations are regarded as concrete images, as reality itself The equations usurp the position of matter It is quite natural that in this way a mathematical or physical idealism should be arrived at, the way of mathematical knowledge is, by its nature, a deviation from the concrete physical world to abstract, purely logical, immaterial categories or formulae.

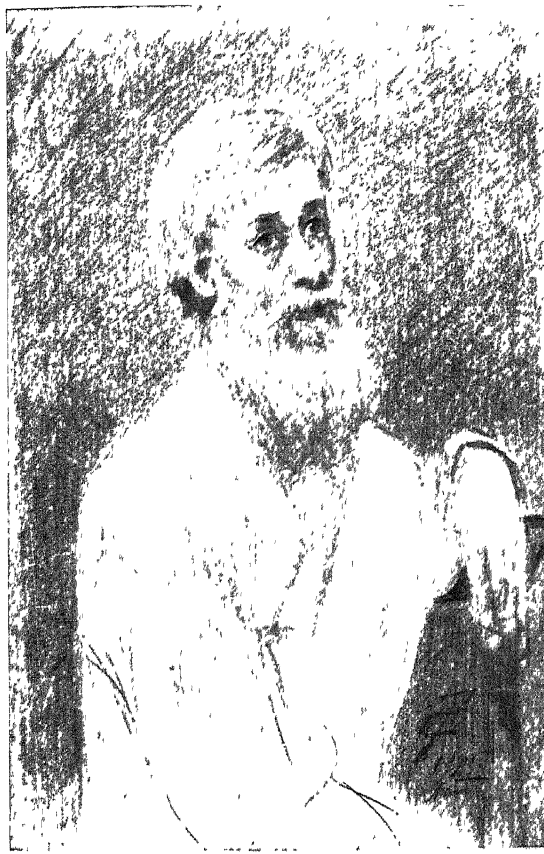
9

All these arguments made it the more necessary for the Bolsheviks to work out all the attainments of exact research from the standpoint of dialectical materialism, that is, to subject all the sciences to a " Marxist revision " For this reason a control of all research and the stern suppression of all false idealistic conclusions were demanded in the name of the Revolution This was all the more necessary as they were pursuing the replacement of religion by the exact natural sciences, and therefore had to avoid letting any theistic ideas spring up afresh within these exact natural sciences.

A group of young scholars engaged in the task of subjecting the natural sciences to a " Marxist revision " of this kind, and of adapting the natural scientific treatment to the materialist-philosophical doctrinal structure This " purging " of the exact sciences was regarded as the most important preliminary work for the building up of the new Bolshevik culture, and the most urgent task of militant materialism. Trotski, who, in principle, shared the views of his comrades on this subject, was, however, the only one who recognized the limits of a " Marxist revision of the natural sciences " " As a rule," he writes, " bourgeois tendencies flourish most freely in the lofty spheres of methodological philosophy, in the ' contemplation of life.' We need, therefore, a cleansing of the scientific structure from below upwards, or rather from above downwards, since the beginning must be made in the upper stories. But it would be naive to assume that the proletariat must critically recast the science it has inherited from the bourgeoisie before it can use it for the socialist structure. That would almost be like saying, as the Utopian moralists demand, that the proletariat must rise to the level of communist morality before it can proceed to form a new society In reality,

the proletariat will radically recreate art as well as science, but not until it has formed in the rough the new society.

"But are we not here involved in a vicious circle? How are we to build up a new society with the aid of the old science and the old morality? Here we need a little dialectic, that dialectic which, with us, is now being sprinkled so liberally on lyric poetry, on ministerial affairs, on soup and porridge The proletariat advance-guard must capture certain *points d'appui*, certain scientific methods, which free the consciousness from the spiritual yoke of the bourgeoisie, before they can undertake their work. To some extent this has already been done; to some extent this work is already started. The proletariat has proved its fundamental methods in many struggles and in the most varying conditions, but it is still a long way from this to a proletarian science The revolutionary class will not, however, give up the fight because their party is not yet clear whether they are to accept or reject the hypothesis of electrons and ions, the psychoanalytic theory of Freud, the nomogenesis of the biologists, the theory of relativity and all the rest of it After they won to power, the proletariat certainly had at their disposal appreciably greater possibilities for comprehending and revising science, but here, too, the thing is much easier said than done The proletariat certainly cannot postpone the socialist structure until its new scholars, many of whom are still running about in short clothes, have examined and purified all the instruments and channels of knowledge. Therefore, we apply the methods and results of present-day science in many fields, and take the admixture of reaction contained therein into the bargain and strip off anything plainly unnecessary, false, and reactionary Practical results will, in the main, justify this procedure, since practice under socialist control must subject gradually the theory and its methods and deductions to selection and revision Meanwhile, scholars will be growing up who have been trained under the new conditions In any case, the proletariat must raise its socialist structure to a considerable height before a fundamental general purification of science from above downwards can be carried through In this, I am saying nothing against that critical work which is already being done in various fields This work is necessary and useful, and must be deepened and extended in every way. But we must not lose the Marxist measure in estimating the value of such experiments and attempts in general relation to our historic work." Even if Trotski thus checks his comrades in their exaggerated estimate of such attempts to bolshevize scientific methods, he is nevertheless not free from the idea that a certain control of science by politics is necessary.



A SECTARIAN

(Drawing by Tatiana Lvovna Tolstoi)

IKON REPRESENTING THE SAINTS OF THE COUNTER-REVOLUTION
(Chernov, Denikin, Kolchak, Iudenich)
Anti-religious Caricature by Deni

Chapter IV

BOLSHEVISM IN THE LIGHT OF SECTARIANISM

I

A CLOSE consideration of the view of life preached by the Bolsheviks will show that their prophets have tried in vain to work out a serviceable system as a basis for their doctrine It can be proved that the radical materialism which they represent does not satisfy the strictly theoretical requirements of scientific judgment, both as regards its methods as well as its conclusions and the whole process of its thought. Anyone trained in the exact methods of thought of the West can see nothing in this Bolshevik materialism but one of those substitute religions which, since the decay of the earlier faith centred in the Church and the rise of scientific rationalism, have continually kept springing up to provide humanity with a new creed in place of the faith they have lost, and to satisfy their eternal yearning for freedom from all evil in new forms adapted to the scientific spirit of the present time

The attempt to enroll Bolshevism, not among the sciences, but among the religions seems at the first glance to be contradicted by the fact that it was the Russian materialists above all others who fought most energetically against every kind of religion, and who made the extermination of religion one of their chief political principles. In Russia at the present time, not only is atheistic propaganda being carried on with all the means of agitation at the disposal of " national enlightenment," but a " materialist dictatorship of opinion " over the whole population has even been decreed, which stigmatizes and prosecutes as a serious political crime the slightest deviation from the Marxian views of orthodox materialism.

Nevertheless, it is precisely in this war against religion that the religious character of Bolshevism can be most clearly discerned; for the key to the understanding of all the manifestations of the Russian life and mind is the perception, important in its psychological bearings, that this apparent contradiction conceals an identity. The furious hostility with which the " scientific materialism " of the Russians confronts all religion is one of the surest proofs that Bolshevism itself may perhaps be treated as a sort of religion and

not as a branch of science. For true representatives of science, however strongly they may personally reject all the things of faith, would never carry on such a "fanatical war" against piety science approaches the verities in quite a different way from religion, and has, therefore, no fundamental reason for setting itself up as a bitter opponent of religion

"Science teaches us," Alexander Herzen once declared, "even more than the Gospel, humility Her attitude to facts is sometimes that of an investigator, sometimes that of a physician, but never that of an executioner, and still less one of hostility or irony.... Science is love, as Spinoza said of thought and knowledge To say 'Do not believe' is as arbitrary and absurd in reality as to say 'Believe!'"

The very passion with which Bolshevism fights religion must make its claim to be regarded as a system with a scientific foundation suspect from the first, a closer investigation unmasks it as, in fact, very closely related in nature to those numerous brotherhoods which, for centuries in Russia, had carried on a similar hostile religious-rationalist campaign against the prevailing faith.

Fritz Gerlich, in his remarkable but hitherto too little remarked book, *Der Kommunismus als Lehre vom Tausendjahrigen Reich*, pointed out at the beginning of the Revolution that the intolerance of communism for other creeds was a specifically sectarian characteristic The orthodox materialism of the Bolsheviks proves more and more to be a religion of salvation aimed at this life, and that by itself explains the profound hostility of the communists for all creeds which look for salvation in a future life This antagonism can never be understood from a knowledge of Russian national economic conditions alone "There is here," says Gerlich, "a rivalry of Gods The god of Marxism, the natural law, the law of evolution of economic conditions, is at war with the personal god of Christianity The commandment of all religious doctrines is at work here too: 'I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt have none other God but me.'"

The justice of this interpretation can be realized only by observing the raving outbursts of rage in which Lenin and his disciples storm against the God of the "other religions," utterances which have not the slightest connection with scientific criticism The degree of hate and anger, the outbursts of fanatical excitement with which they attack any conception of the world opposed to their own, are rather extremely characteristic of the mode of thought of "religious rebels," such as were perhaps to be found earlier only in the Middle Ages, the Reformation, and the world of the Russian sects.

Whenever Lenin spoke or wrote on things of faith, it was only very rarely that what he said took the form of scientific objections

such as French enlightenment or Western Socialism has brought forward to oppose religion, generally, it was nothing but the denunciations of a man quivering with rage This sectarian intransigence against any heterodox movement, however subtle, emerges most clearly from Lenin's letters to his friend and fighting comrade, Maxim Gorki Gorki, who entirely shared Lenin's socio-political views and also his antagonism to religion, nevertheless, in one of his writings allowed the right of a real " God-creation " springing from man's deepest nature. Seized with boundless wrath at Gorki's " underhand religiousness," which he regarded as a betrayal of friendship, Lenin wrote to Gorki that he saw that he would be opposed to " God-seeking " only for " a time," and that only because he aimed at replacing it by a " God-creation."

" Is it not horrible to think," asks Lenin, " what you will come to in this way? "

" God-seeking," he goes on, " differs from God-creating or God-making and other things of the kind, much as a yellow devil differs from a blue. It is a hundred times worse to preach against God-seeking, not in order to condemn all devils and gods whatever (that ideological plague, as any faith in God, however pure, ideal, and spontaneous, must be regarded), but in order to give to a blue devil preference over a yellow—that is a hundred times worse than to say nothing at all on the subject.

" In the freest countries, the people and the workers are stupefied with the idea of a pure, spiritual Godhead, which had originally to be created. Just because every religious idea, every idea of any God, nay, all coquetting with such thoughts, is an unutterable baseness, it is gladly suffered, often welcomed even, by the democratic bourgeoisie, merely because it is the most dangerous baseness, the most vile infection Millions of sins, obscenities, crimes of violence, and infections of a physical kind are easily unmasked by the masses, they are, therefore, much less dangerous than the subtle spiritualized idea of God, dressed up to the nines in ideological costume. A Catholic parson who rapes girls is much less a danger to democracy than a parson without priestly garments, without crude religion, an ideal and democratic parson, who preaches the creation of a new God. For it is easy to unmask the first parson, easy to condemn and reject him. But the other is not so easily disposed of, it is a thousand times more difficult to get rid of him, and no feeble vacillating *petit bourgeois* will want to sentence him.

" And you, you who know the feebleness and weak vacillation of the *petit bourgeois* soul, lead it astray with a poison which is as sweet as sugar-candy and decked out in all sorts of gay fopperies.

" It is truly sickening.

" . . . Every man who occupies himself with the construction of

a God, or merely even agrees to it, prostitutes himself in the worst way, for he occupies himself not with activity, but with self-contemplation and self-reflection, and tries thereby to deify his most unclean, most stupid, and most servile features or pettinesses

" From the social and not the personal point of view, all God-creating is nothing but the tender self-contemplation of the dull *petite bourgeoisie*, the feeble Philistine, the dreamy, self-reviling, doubting, and tired bourgeois . . They are all of the devil, equally vile, the *petite bourgeoisie* is base throughout, but this democratic philistinism, which concerns itself with ideological contagion, is trebly base.

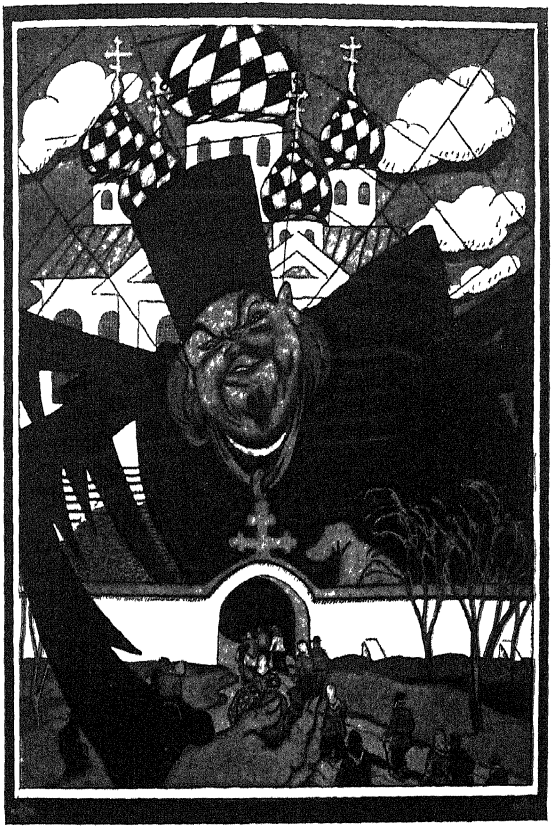
" I am reading your article again and trying hard to understand how you could fall into this error, but I remain bewildered . .

" Why do you do it?

" A thing like that hurts a man devilishly "

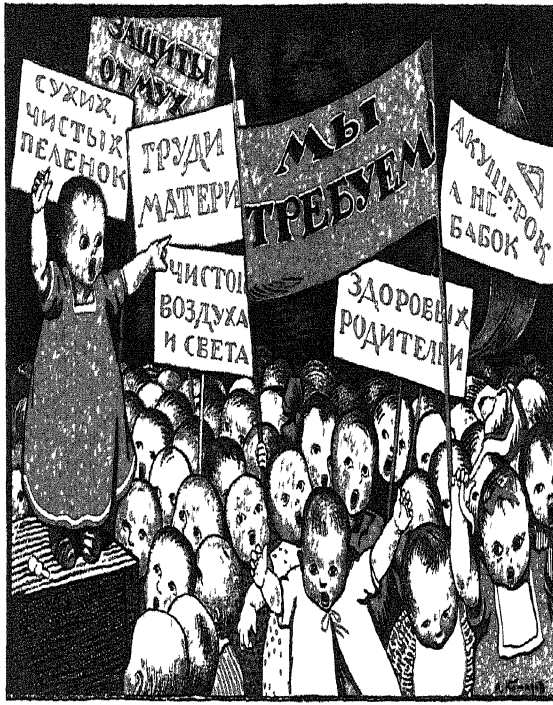
2

Lenin, who would not suffer in his friend even such a slight impulse to faith in a God however veiled in form, who saw no more difference between the various forms of religious feeling than that between " yellow and blue devils," was himself obsessed by the " red devil " of materialism, the most crafty and dangerous of all the devils that ever governed a mind It is only necessary to strip from Bolshevism the " ideological costume " of the materialism of the 'sixties, already somewhat out of fashion in Europe, to recognize at once the same " devil " which once practised its excesses in the barns and other meeting-places of the Russian sectarians, which promised the worthy " Molokany " (Milk-drinkers) the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, if only they would give up their possessions, which revealed salvation to the " Khlysty " (Flagellators) in sexual communism, and which would allow the " Skoptsy " (Castrated) to enter paradise only if they mutilated themselves But these devils of the credulous sectarians must, in Lenin's own words, be described as considerably " less dangerous " than " the subtle, spiritualized God-idea, dressed up to the nines in ideological costume," to which Lenin himself adhered. For, if we disregard the somewhat wooden and forced scientific terminology of Bolshevik materialism, and concentrate on what it promises to its adherents who are ready, like the Molokany, to cast away all their possessions, like the Khlysty, to accept physical communism, and, like the Skoptsy, to mutilate themselves, we see at once that the final goal of all these promises is again the kingdom of God on earth, which the Russian national devil, be he yellow, blue, or red, has from time immemorial promised to his believers as a reward for their renunciations.



THE ORTHODOX PRIEST AS A GARDEN SPIDER

(Anti-religious Caricature by Demi)



PROPAGANDA CARD

"Self-government for Children"

But the adherents of this new sect may be reckoned among those who are the most intolerant fanatics to themselves in particular and to all others of heterodox creeds, which the Russian soil has ever produced. None of the many religious brotherhoods was ever seized with " holy obsession " to such a degree as that of the Bolsheviks, and none was ever so prodigal in earthly promises Therein, perhaps, lies the secret of the mysterious and almost mystical fascination which attracted such great hosts to it and won for it such power over Russia What the Bolsheviks promised, and still promise, to the masses, is exactly that same actual, tangible paradise on earth which the Russian sectarians had always yearned for This leaning to chiliasm, to faith in the coming of the millennium, was also the true reason why the Sects left the Orthodox Church it promised only a vague future life.

The rationalism of the Bolsheviks, therefore, has, in fact, its roots in the peculiar soul-life of the Russian sects, the hopes of all these men were always set on a paradise in this life, on a " human godhead ", their religious conceptions always displayed thoroughly practical, rationalistic features and were governed by the longing for earthly felicity.

In the view of the sectarians, God created men to be brothers, but men began to chaffer, not only in earthly goods, but also in their conscience, their own souls, and the souls of their fellow men From this traffic came all evil, enmities, wars, bloodshed, hunger, and misery. The cause of all these terrible things was riches, which only the evil use, while the good do not need them Therefore, it is the duty of man to restore the state of primal innocence, as it existed before trade arose.

The basis of a world-order pleasing to God consists, therefore, according to the teaching of the sectarians, primarily in absence of possessions. Everything which God has created is the common possession of all, which anyone who works may use.

Here, therefore, Bolshevism is already in the closest touch with the ideas of the Russian sectarians, the " Raskol'niki "; both regard private property as something loathsome, a means to evil, and both hanker after a society in which there are no classes, in which there is no distinction between rich and poor.

The " paradise on earth," too, is not only contained in the prophecies of the Raskol'niki, it appears again continually in those of the Bolsheviks: " Our ultimate aim," says Lenin, " is the elimination of the State and therewith of all organized and systematic power. The State can be entirely done away with if men will only become so conscious of the basic rules of their common life as to work, of their own free will, in accordance with their capacities. We shall then go beyond the narrow horizon of bourgeois law, which,

with the hard-heartedness of a Shylock, makes a man hesitate to work half an hour longer than his fellows The distribution of commodities will render unnecessary any fixing by society of the share of the individual Everyone will be able to take all he wants, freely according to his needs "

In one of his speeches Trotski also made a similar declaration " Let the parsons of all religious creeds keep telling us of a paradise in the world to come, we declare that we want to create a real paradise on this earth for the human race. We must not lose sight, even for a moment, of this great ideal, it is the highest aim towards which humanity has ever striven, and in it all that is most beautiful and noble in the old faiths is united and embodied "

It is surprising to find how often the Bolsheviks use exactly the same thought-structure and the same symbolic images as those with which the peasant sectarians in earlier times painted the future paradise and particularized the sacrifices by means of which alone man could participate in the kingdom of heaven on earth. The Bolshevists may sometimes have used a somewhat different technical expression for one or other of the old ritualistic religious precepts, but the sense of their speeches was always the same as that of the sectarian preachers, and it was at once recognized and understood by the masses in its new form The peasants, when the Bolsheviks told them of Marxian communism, the development of economic productive conditions, and " scientific materialism," immediately grasped clearly and correctly the gist of all this teaching, namely that it was mainly a question of the distribution of the land and the " brotherhood " of all men.

3

Bolshevism and sectarianism thus had common aims, and, therefore, the same enemies with the Bolsheviks, too, it was again a case of driving from the field the rich and those of great possessions, with whom the Raskol'niki had long been at strife Even the war against the power of the tsars, with which Bolshevism began its political activity, had long been a principle of the sectarians, who, without exception, had seen in the tsars the incarnation of Antichrist, and, in their rule, the strongest bulwark of private property and so of social inequality

The Bolsheviks, too, in their hostility to the existing religions, are actuated by the very same motives as the Russian peasant sectarians both regard the Church as the tool of the rich, for both the war against clericalism is at the same time a war against plutocracy

" Faith in God and the devil," as Bukharin puts it, " in good and

evil spirits, angels, and saints, in a word, in religion, is a means of confusing the national consciousness Many people are accustomed to believe all this, but when we examine more closely how religion arose and why the gentlemen of the bourgeoisie maintain it with such zeal, then the real meaning of religion, as a poison for the people, becomes clear, and then too we understand why the Communist Party has always fought all religions with the utmost resolution

" Science has shown that religion began with the worship of dead ancestors, and, indeed, at the very moment when the so-called elders of the tribe, the richest, most experienced, and wisest old men already possessed a material or moral authority over the other members of the society At the beginning of history, when men still lived in herds like half-apes, they were equal It was not till later that the elders emerged and began to assume lordship over the others Man began first by worshipping them; the worship of dead rich men is thus the basis of religion. . It is an interesting fact that the Russian word for God testifies to this origin of religion The term *Bog*, God, comes from the same root as the word *bogaty*, rich God is therefore strong, powerful, and rich What other names has God? He is called the Lord, that signifies lord in contrast to slave, God is also called the Ruler of Heaven, and all the other titles of God, such as Governor and the like, point in the same direction God is, therefore, an allegedly existing, rich, powerful lord, a slave owner, a ruler of heaven, a judge—in a word an exact copy and facsimile of the mighty on earth When the Hebrews were ruled by their princes, who punished and tortured them in every way, there arose the doctrine of a severe and wrathful God, the God of the Old Testament He was a cruel old man who mercilessly chastised his subjects If we now consider the orthodox God of the Russians, we find that dogma about him had its origin in Byzantium, a country where autocratic rule was the model. At the head of this empire stood the monarch surrounded by his ministers, then followed the higher officials, and the tail was made up of a whole army of petty cut-purses. The orthodox religion is the exact copy of these institutions: at the top sits the ruler of heaven, round him the great saints as ministers, and below a whole hierarchy of angels and saints as the officials of this autocratic realm. In such a political entity the officials would want their palms greased before they would do any service. Hence the saints must have a candle burned to them; otherwise they will be cross and will not let the petition reach the highest authority, God. . .

" Faith in God is thus a reflection of loathsome earthly conditions, it is faith in a slavery which exists, presumably, not only on earth but throughout the Universe. . . ."

Lenin expressed himself in a similar way: " Religion," he says

in his book, *Socialism and Religion*, "is one of the forms of that spiritual yoke which always and everywhere has been laid on the masses of the people crushed by poverty The weakness of the exploited classes, in their struggles with their oppressors, inevitably produced a faith in a better life in the next world, just as the weakness of the savage in the struggle with nature led to faith in gods, devils, and miracles. Religion teaches such men, who work and endure poverty all their lives, humility and patience by holding out the consolation of a heavenly reward But the exploiters are urged by faith to do good on earth, because in this way they think to win justification for their existence and a sort of ticket of admission to heavenly bliss. Religion is an opiate for the people, a sort of spiritual vodka, meant to make the slaves of capitalism tread in the dust their human form and their aspirations to a semi-decent existence. But the slave who becomes conscious of his slavery has already half ceased to be a slave The modern worker, who is taught by his work in the factory and enlightened by urban life, contemptuously casts off religious prejudices, and leaves heaven to the parsons and devout bourgeois, while he himself tries to win a better life here on earth"

We thus see that Bolshevism, exactly like sectarianism, regards traditional religion as a factor of oppression on behalf of rich lords, and decisively rejects the idea of a transcendental salvation The Bolsheviks, like the adherents of the Russian sects, look for their redemption in this world, both hope definitely for the coming of an earthly "millennium"

4

Almost all the Russian sects, as they existed in the time of the rule of the tsars, and still exist in the midst of the Bolshevik world of orthodox materialism, show in their spiritual principles a predominantly religious-rationalist character. It is true that there are also a number of brotherhoods of orgiastic, mystical tendencies, but, in their rites, religious worship, and articles of faith, a trained psychologist will also recognize, without difficulty, many of the roots and first stages of present-day Bolshevism.

Of the sects with a more rationalist tinge, the "Adventists" and the "New Adventists" (a split-off from the former) have strong communistic features which remind one of Bolshevism, before the upheaval their propaganda had made itself very conspicuous, especially in the south of the Russian Empire They regard orthodoxy, with all its ceremonies and its worship of saints and relics, as a remnant of paganism, and take the Holy Scriptures, especially the Gospels, as the basis of their social faith.

They do everything in their power to spread the Gospel among the people, and they preach the union of all men in a brotherly

community A considerable time ago a split occurred in their ranks because one party professed itself content with a dogmatic development of their doctrine, while the other had a mind to lay stress on the social and political conclusions that might be drawn from it. This second party then formed the sect of the " New Adventists," which rejected the orthodox Church and called the clerical dignitaries " angels with claws and tails," whose power was nothing but sheer might In reality, however, there should be no might on earth but that of God neither Government, prisons, nor other punishments are necessary or permissible, the land and the soil are equally the property of all, like all other earthly goods In the opinion of the New Adventists, money and every kind of trade are superfluous; they call Christ their " elder brother " But, in all their evangelical views, the New Adventists are strongly inclined to adopt Western European ideas and especially modern Socialism

The " Nemoliakhi," too, the " Non-prayers," have for long had revolutionary tendencies This sect arose in the Sarapul district in the Urals They always refused to pay all taxes. The sect sprang up at the time of the abolition of serfdom, when a part of the peasant population of the Urals revolted against the unjust distribution of the soil As the spiritual powers then ranged themselves on the side of the landowners, the disappointed and embittered peasants drove out their priests, whom they looked upon as the servants of the rich and powerful The peasants closed the churches, and declared that God was everywhere, not only in God's houses, that ikons were nothing but painted slabs of wood, soulless idols, which must be burned, that truth could not lie in mysteries, since God did not play hide and seek with men, fasting was a superstition, the Holy Scriptures a bungling piece of work invented by feeble, ingenuous men, and that, though Christ was truth, he was nevertheless a man and the son of a man

Another sect, which has only been known for fifty years, is the restlessly wandering " Beguny," or " Stranniki," the " Pilgrims," who consider all moral or religious order to be the work of Satan. Widespread, too, are the " Staroobriadtsy " (Old Believers), a very peculiar brotherhood, whose members also refuse to recognize the consecrated priests. The sect of the Old Believers, too, proclaims that the existing Church is not the true one, only the new Church of Christ, founded on the teaching of the Gospel, conforms to the will of God

Similar views were held by the " Neplatel'shchiki," the " Non-Payers," another peasant sect in the Urals. They, too, refused all payment of dues either to the Church or the State, because God created the world without receivers of taxes, and taxes were an invention of Antichrist, the protector of the rich. This sect so

completely severed all connection with the orthodox Church that its members cast off all baptismal names that recalled the Church saints, they developed, in contrast to the other rather passive brotherhoods, an active revolutionary activity, and tried everywhere systematically to upset the orthodox Church services, or to agitate against the priests in the churches themselves during religious rites

Disputes with the authorities were the occasion for the appearance of another sect, the " Medal'shchiki," or " Medallists," who also refused to pay taxes, and opposed the expropriation of their land by the tsarist authorities After seeking in vain for help from the spiritual powers, they also separated from the orthodox Church, and declared all private property to be a sin Entirely similar motives led to the rise at the same time of various sects in the Caucasus, who called themselves " Holy Israel," or " The People of God," prophesied a millennium, and desired to found the " Kingdom of God here in this World " among men, with an entirely communist constitution

To the actively revolutionary sects belongs that founded by Captain N S Il'in, the " Jehovists " Il'in had declared religions to be a wall dividing men, with the device " Lord, forgive them not, for they know what they do," he proceeded to battle against the different forms of religion, and, in the name of a better future, incited men to irreconcilable war against the " Satanists," against all the spiritual and temporal powers, who prevent men from living in accordance with their own will Il'in described Christianity as really paganism, and taught that the whole world existed equally for all men. In the future, all inequality would cease, and joy would reign everywhere, but now the important thing was to wage the " war of light against darkness," in the name of peace, universal brotherhood, and love.

For Il'in there were in the world two equally strong human gods, Jehovah and Satan. Jehovah was for him the God of the immortals, or " Jehovists," but Satan, the God of the mortals, or " Satanists." Differences in languages, too, he treated as a work of the devil, and he, therefore, endeavoured to create a world language uniting all men

During the war there arose the sect of the " Sviatodukhovtsy," the adherents of the Holy Ghost, who sprang from the sect of the Old Believers They proclaimed that true Christian faith has perished, that humanity no longer possesses any real priesthood or successors to the Apostles of Christ, and has lost all the holy mysteries which illuminated the life of men, because there are no more genuine altar servers The whole world is fallen into delusion, the times of Antichrist are come, and man has no longer any shepherd who can stand before the Throne of God and entreat for him. These sectarians inflexibly denied any spiritual hierarchy, and also the bureaucracy and all other mundane power, all external signs of

spiritual or temporal authority were to them the " Seals of Antichrist " before which immediate flight was necessary.

Further, they formed an original community, which was widespread, particularly among the peasants, and which departed from all the old rules to follow their own teaching, morals, and customs. Among them there were no class distinctions, they lived in free marriage, recognized no Church ceremonies, and had their own views on the law of inheritance and their own particular mode of living

The world war appeared to this sect as the devil's last great effort to conquer God, after it, the Almighty would receive into his kingdom the weary and heavy-laden Soon there would be no more punishment or war, no more deeds of violence or tribulations, then only would the true life of the Son of God begin

The " Sviatodukhovtsy " found great response among the people They call themselves the founders of a new religion, harshly reject all the prevailing creeds, and even deny their connection with Christianity, although they recognize the Gospel and teach the Old Testament They maintain that Christianity is lost, and is no longer possible in the present age, since all the elements are lacking which once made the Christian faith strong It is necessary to found a new creed which satisfies the changed conditions at all points

Among the most widespread chiliastic-socialistic sects of Russia are the brotherhoods of the " Dukhobortsy " and the " Molokany," which originally came from the circle of the " People of God " and began in Tiflis. Even in the time of the tsars they had aimed at a new " Kingdom of Zion " which was to be called " Dukhoboriia ", this community wanted to lead an existence free of all duties to the State on the " Mokryia Gory," the " Swampy Mountains," a plateau reaching almost to the clouds. They were willing, it is true, to pay tribute to their neighbour, the powerful Russian state, but they wished to be recognized and respected as an independent nation. They created a centre and an administration of their own by means of the remarkable institution of the " Orphanage," with a sort of hierarchical power. This was the headquarters of their leader, the administrator and governor of the people, endowed with the gifts of Christ existing from all eternity

Through their whole social and ethical attitude, and particularly by their renunciation of all private property, the Dukhobortsy and the Molokany had a very great influence on Russian spiritual life. But the most notable thing about them is that Leo Tolstoi fell under their spell To them he owes his whole system of social ethics, as well as the peculiar features of his " practical Christianity." It was through Tolstoi that these ideas became generally known in Western Europe, but very few people learned any details of the source of these Tolstoian doctrines.

5

These sects have almost all a more or less rationalist-communist character, and have many features in common with the Anabaptists, Hussites, and other movements which preceded the great Reformation in Western Europe Indeed, it almost seems as if in Russia, too, where, as has been said, everything European often enough occurs several centuries later, a revolution was to be accomplished, analogous even in its socio-economic aspects to the one enacted in Central Europe at the time of the Reformation

From this point of view special interest attaches to some sects with mystical and orgiastic tendencies, which, in a remarkable way, recall certain peculiarities, rites, and excesses of many of the brotherhoods which preceded the Reformation

The most remarkable of these is a flagellant sect, which was widespread in Central Russia and particularly in the Government of Moscow, the Khlysty or Scourgers, and the Skoptsy, who developed from them.

The Khlysty may be regarded as representing a communism with predominantly sexual and erotic tendencies, while the Skoptsy, on the contrary, eliminate all sex life, and the Fire Baptists go the length of complete self-annihilation. The home of the Khlysty sect is in Central Russia, particularly in the neighbourhood of Moscow. At their meetings in a building chosen for the purpose, or, if need be, in a barn, a tub of water is placed in the middle of the assembly room, which is regarded as a symbol of the river Jordan All those present, men and women, strip to the skin, seize green branches which are placed there ready, and begin to scourge first the water but later each other, until they become completely ecstatic Without this state of ecstasy, they assert, no commerce or union with God is possible

After continued flagellation has brought them to a frenzied state of excitement, they give themselves up to the most wild and unbridled orgies, in which complete promiscuity is the rule, with the exception of one couple who are predestined to " create the God child." These two look on, from a special dais, at the whole confused scene enacted before them, and may not embrace until the general ecstasy is at its height. During the whole festival, which is supposed to culminate in the appearance of the " Holy Ghost," dances are performed which rise to heights of rapture

The adherents of the Khlysty sect, alluding to the " Holy Ghost " they invoke, call themselves " doves "; all the songs, too, which they sing at their orgiastic ceremonies, relate to the dove and the " Holy Ghost "

It must be mentioned that the sect of the Khlysty has an art of its own, which finds expression chiefly in a characteristic decoration and a highly developed sense of style

However strange it may sound at first, it must be emphasized that Bolshevism has features which may very well be connected with this sect Communist party journals have often reported the orgiastic festivals held by the members of the atheistic association of youth, the "Komsomol," which go by the name of "African nights" This, too, is a sort of erotic cult in which wild unrestraint often prevails.

The Skoptsy arose from the Khlysty and are allied to this sect in many respects The Skoptsy or the Castrated form a very widespread brotherhood It was founded in 1760 by Selivanov, a peasant belonging to the Orel Government. Even now, nearly a hundred years after his death, Selivanov is reverenced by his disciples as an incarnation of God on earth

The sect soon spread over the whole of Russia, a fact which was due not least to zealous propaganda. Those who professed this creed looked for the advent, in the near future, of the Messiah who would set up his kingdom in Russia, and hand over all temporal power to his faithful ones, the "saints" and "virgins." The most important qualification for participation in the new kingdom of heaven, in the teaching of the Skoptsy, is self-mutilation; for is it not written in the Gospel: "For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb. and there are some eunuchs which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake" (Matthew, xix, 12).

Saint Luke writes in the same sense (xxiii, 29): "For behold the days are coming, in the which they shall say, 'Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bare and the paps that never gave suck.'"

This "royal seal," mutilation, is therefore accomplished among the Skoptsy by castration among the men, and amputation of the breasts among the women. But since it is stated, in the seventh chapter of Revelations, that the number of the "sealed" must be a hundred and forty-four thousand, the Skoptsy have zealously endeavoured to complete as soon as possible the number of those who bear the "royal seal," so that their Redeemer may be able to appear.

At their secret meetings, held at night, sermons are preached and songs are sung, followed by wild dances like dervish rites, similar to those of the Khlysty. They are carried on to the point of dislocation of the limbs and utter exhaustion. The Skoptsy too call themselves the "Community of the White Dove."

The Skoptsy have, from the beginning, had members belonging

to the most varied classes of society and occupations, aristocrats, officers, clergy, and officials, as well as merchants, soldiers, and people from the lower classes. They all reject the orthodox Church with contempt, call it Antichrist, and refuse the Sacrament in any form New members have first of all to be rebaptized, and thus, before they are " sealed," that is mutilated, attain to the first degree.

Two other very peculiar sects are adherents of the " Fire Baptists " The " Krasnye Krestinnye " are convinced that every man must undergo " fire baptism " before his natural end, in order to participate in bliss and be redeemed and not go to Hell If a member of this sect is on the point of death the relations of the sick person must strangle him with a red cushion held in readiness for the purpose in order to save his soul. Cases of such smothering on the deathbed are by no means rare; only recently in the Government of Kastiama there was a lawsuit in which a man sued the parents of his betrothed and accused them of having practised " fire baptism " on the girl

The second group of the " Fire Baptists," the sect of the " Morel'shchiki," the " Self-Sacrificers," is one of the most dangerous of these fanatical religious associations. they extol suicide, and submit themselves, either individually or in considerable numbers, to death by fire, by assembling in a house and burning it over their heads. Behaviour of this kind is regarded as an act pleasing to God.

Even now, every year in the Government of Nizhni-Novgorod, an extraordinary festival takes place at which all the mystical sects assemble to dispute about God. This festival is bound up with a peculiar legend, which Rimski-Korsakov worked up into an opera: A prince is supposed to have built the town of Kitezh in the fifteenth century, when the Tartars invaded the country the town was engulfed in a lake, so says the legend. On the 23rd of June every year this sunken town becomes visible to the sectarians who have arrived at a true knowledge of God, they alone can see the town and hear its bells ringing Every year the dispute between individual sects is decided in this way

6

If we pass in review once more all these Russian sects we can, as Friedrich Eckstein first pointed out, establish a remarkable advance in the form in which they expressed the idea of communism which is fundamental in them all The Molokany and the Dukhobortsy and all the other rationalist sects confined themselves to proclaiming a community of earthly possessions, but among the Khlysty we see an advance love, marriage, and the family have ceased to be a private matter, and with them we find promiscuous sexual intercourse.

A further straining of the same thought is to be perceived in the Skoptsy, for whom a complete renunciation of sex, and thus of all family life, is a condition of " entry into the Kingdom of Heaven " But an even greater advance is conceivable in which the horrible mutilations practised by the Skoptsy are exceeded this is the custom of the Fire Baptists, who consciously seek common death by fire, and thereby renounce " private property " even in their own lives.

If we compare with this the development of Bolshevism, we see that Russian communism has, so far, either reached or consciously included in its programme only the first of the above-mentioned stages, the abandoning of private property, and, to some extent also, the second, the " collective " form of love and the family. The third stage, as found among the Skoptsy, is only indicated in Bolshevism in the complete contempt for all family ties, and in the declaration that love, marriage, the family, and all forms of sexual attraction are things without interest and importance, which perhaps had a false and delusory sentimental interest for the old bourgeoisie, but which, in the eyes of a serious and class-conscious communist of the present time, are nothing but " empty fiddlefaddle "

But the possibility that Bolshevism, in its further progress, may also take over the basic idea of the Fire Baptists offers a certain danger, for it is after all to be remarked that Lenin once declared that it would not matter a jot if three quarters of the human race perished; the important thing was that the remaining quarter should be communists

It can thus be seen quite clearly that the way had long before been prepared, in principle, for the Russian Revolution and the Bolshevism that succeeded it in the doctrines of the Russian sectarians. It is only by penetrating into the maze of all these peculiar religions and social communities, by getting to know the religious rites and articles of faith (which often reach far back into the past) of the brotherhoods, with all their excesses and repulsive orgies, that flourished in obscurity in European and Asiatic Russia long before the overthrow of Tsarism, that we can understand the origin of many phases of Russian spiritual life at the present time.

Finally, if we consider that we can hardly be in error in estimating the number of the members of these sects, before the Revolution, at about one-third of the total population of this enormous country, we are bound to admit that we are here confronted by a phenomenon of truly elemental power, which must be of the greatest significance, not only from the religious, but also from the socio-political, point of view

For these rationalistic-chiliastic notions of the Russian sects, and not least their manifold mystical manifestations, which aimed at bringing about the realization of a communist primitive Christianity,

soon forced their way into the higher strata of the Russian intelligentsia, and into the world of ideas of the politicians, until finally they took possession of the whole spiritual life of Russia. An indication of the close alliance which even then existed between the sectarians and the socialist parties may be seen in the fact that under Tsardom the parliamentary deputies of the Socialist peasant party, the " Trudoviki," during the sessions of the Duma in Petersburg, lived in a positively cloistral community, slept in one room, and kept a common purse These politicians conceived their socialism in an entirely religious spirit, and endeavoured to express it in their whole mode of living

But the alliance of ideas between the sects and the Russian socialists was seen most clearly at the time when the Imperial Government was persecuting the sects most vigorously and banishing thousands of them to Siberia At that time the Russian revolutionaries ranged themselves decisively on the side of the oppressed sectaries, whom they regarded as their comrades in ideas At that instant their political views became even more intimately merged with the social and religious ideas of the Raskol'niki, and the conceptions of the latter became more strongly apparent in the ideology of the revolutionary politicians The party of the " Zemlevol'tsy " adopted the programme of the Adventist sect in its entirety, and embodied it in a definite political system; and from the Zemlevol'tsy, according to Russian historians, these purely religious ideas penetrated farther into the circles of the social revolutionaries and the socialists themselves

The Russian intelligentsia who, though they represented a section of the bourgeoisie, were, politically, extremely revolutionary in their views, fell most rapidly under the spell of the religious-rationalistic ideas originated by the sects In fact, the true historical rôle of the Russian intelligentsia was just this linking up of these half-mystical notions with the modern principles of Marxist materialism, for it was only by the amalgamation that the soil was prepared for the Bolshevik revolution

If we read the descriptions which Berdiaev, Frank, and other Russian sociologists have given in the periodical *Vekhi* (" Boundary Posts ") of the intellectual constitution of the bourgeois intelligentsia on the eve of the Bolshevik upheaval, we recognize at once that the chiliastic doctrine of the sects, linked up by the intelligentsia with the ideas of Western socialism, had decades before prepared the way for the Bolshevism which now seized power in Russia

According to *Vekhi* the Russian intelligentsia had always seen the highest task of humanity in a satisfaction of the needs of the majority, and the furtherance of the national well-being; the sole

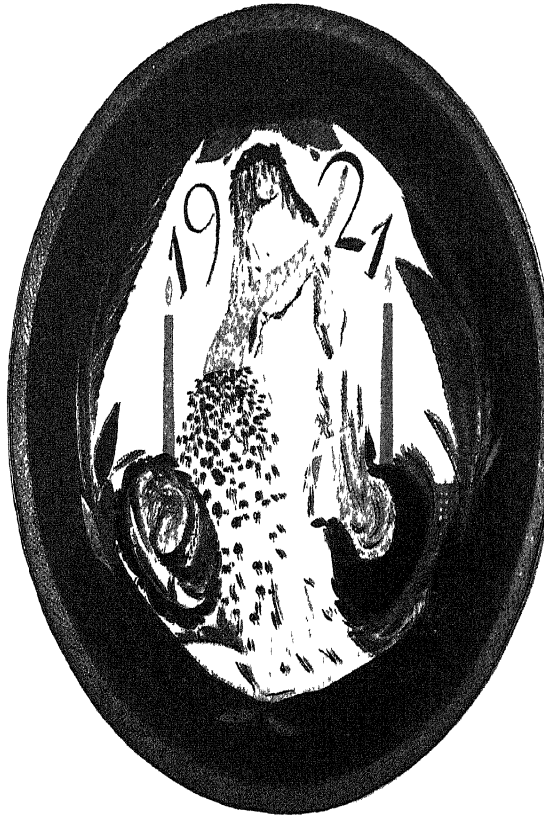
standard and the sole orientation of the Russian intellectuals had always consisted in a division of men, actions, and conditions into the socially useful and the socially harmful. The bourgeois intelligentsia never had any feeling for theoretical, aesthetic, and religious values, and, in the works of thinkers, they never sought for scientific truth, but only for practical social utility

The philosophy of the Russian intelligentsia was always subordinated to avowedly utilitarian ends. Preoccupation with pure philosophy, regardless of humanitarian aims, was even regarded as immoral, since they believed it to be a betrayal of the cause of the people To moral nihilism, to which the Russian intelligentsia adhered, may also be ascribed the denial of all objective values and the deification of subjective interests; they regarded material security and well-being as the highest and only goal of humanity This intellectual constitution explains how the conception of culture seemed fundamentally alien and hostile to the Russian intelligentsia, even if the word was always on their lips For what their representatives understood by the concept " culture " always bore the imprint of utilitarianism they conceived of it as railways, canalization, national education, progressive methods of administration, and similar useful means to directly practical ends.

Even the demand for improved education for the community did not spring from a wish to provide as many people as possible with the inner happiness of spiritual perceptions or artistic impressions, but rather solely from the idea that the schooling of the people is adapted to increase their material welfare.

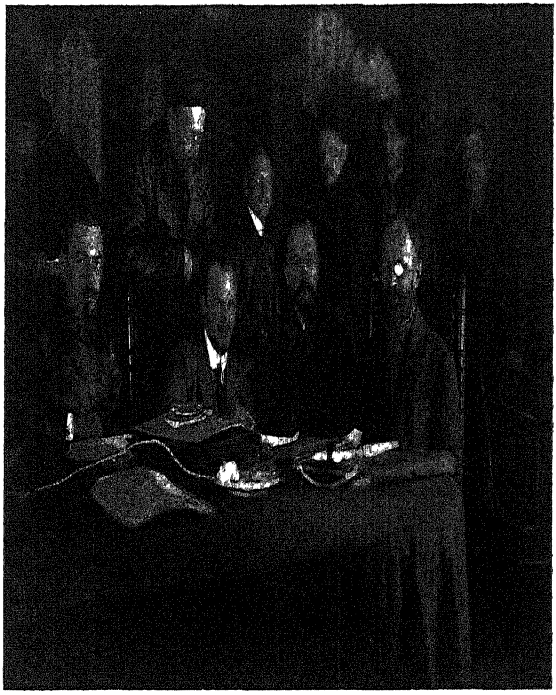
This striving for the material happiness of the people always proceeded from the conviction that all the misery and all the imperfections of earthly life come from the errors or malice of individual men and classes, if they could but succeed in doing away with the injustice of those in power and the stupidity of the oppressed, the " paradise on earth " would at once burst upon the world.

The social outlook on the world of the Russian intelligentsia, therefore, was based on a eudaemonist fundamental conception attached to materialism; in his contemporaries, the intellectual saw, on the one hand, the victims, and, on the other hand, the originators, of the evil of the world. So a great love for the humanity of the future produced a passionate hate for part of their contemporaries; the striving after an earthly paradise dissolved into a passion for the destruction of the existing state of affairs; the credulous man of the intelligentsia became a revolutionary Since the obstacles which stood in the way of the earthly felicity of the people were, according to their theory, purely external, they could only be done away with by external, mechanical means. Therefore, this work for the introduction of the earthly paradise was not positively creative and



"LABOUR," DESIGN ON CHINA PLATE

THE BOLSHEVIK SYMBOLS ON CHINA MADE BY THE FORMER IMPERIAL POTTERY FACTORY



LEADERS OF SOVIET RUSSIA

(From left to right) Sokolnikov, Piatakov, Bukharin, Kamenev, Kurski

Chapter V

THE BOLSHEVIK MONUMENTAL STYLE

I

IN all the variations of revolutionary art, from the heroic propagandist sculpture of the first days of the upheaval, through the ever-changing "isms," futurism, cubism, suprematism, imagism, colour-dynamism, and tectonic primitivism, cosmism, expressionism, and constructivism, right up to the "left classicism" which has at last been proclaimed to be the one true style of the new Russia, one uniform feature is found, the longing for something imposing, surpassing anything that the world has ever seen. It was regarded as the highest aim of the new proletarian culture to be created, to invent the most impressive and powerful expression possible of the "Empire of the Mass," and thus to erect the "ideological superstructure," and provide the great vindication of the Revolution.

In Bukharin's view every class of society on its way to political power must also conquer the realm of art, for it is the proper instrument for the "socialization of the emotions"; it alone can create the atmosphere and temper which is necessary in order that the class concerned may be able to exercise political power. "However lofty the social achievements represented by the solution of the elementary problems of feeding, clothing, heating, and educating the people may be in themselves," said Trotski on one occasion, "they alone do not signify a complete victory of the new historical principle; that can only be accomplished by building up a changed scientific mode of thought on a national scale, and by the development of a new art. Only a movement which is able to make a fundamental change in scientific perceptions and artistic appreciations would prove that the historical seed has not only ripened into stalks but also into blossom." Trotski here sees in art a sort of touchstone for the vitality and significance of an historical epoch; it is not, therefore, surprising that Bolshevism has made the greatest efforts to achieve a new stylistic expression. In accordance with the universal endeavour to proletarianize and influence the masses, the modern style in the graphic arts is sought, not within the frame of "bourgeois studio-work," but on the street and in the factory, that is, in places accessible to thousands.

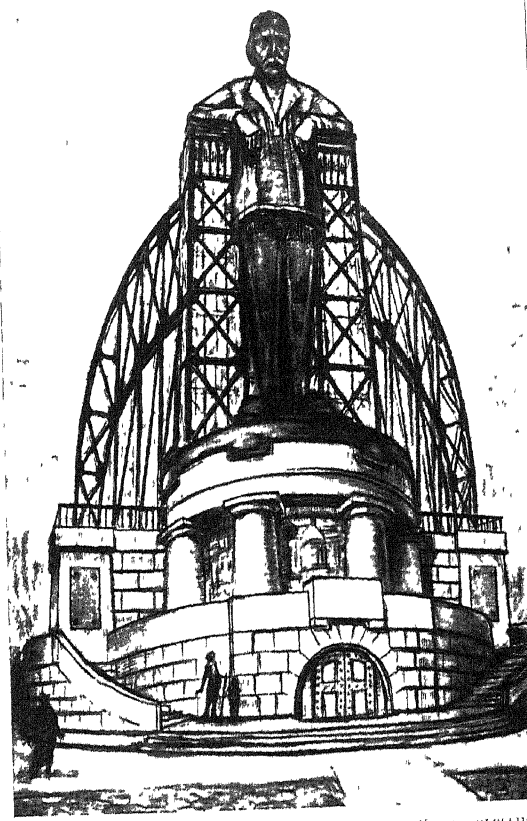
The revolutionary art thus aims at working on the great masses and influencing them in a political direction. It has, therefore, to adapt its standard to the new public, the hundred-thousand-headed people, a standard which of itself tends strongly to the development of the greatest monumentality Every revolutionary artist, to whatever " ism " he may belong, in all his attempts, has had ever before his eyes colossal creations such as were produced in the great historical periods, the Egyptian, classical antiquity, or the flourishing period of Gothic. It had to be the endeavour of the revolutionary artist to create similar mighty monuments for his own day, with this difference, however, that the new monuments were not intended to celebrate the fame of a tyrant or a race of oppressors, but the victory and the limitless power of the now liberated " nameless ones "

The revolution therefore gave to artists an authority such as had never before been known in the history of art, hence nothing stood in the way of realizing the most gigantic projects Absolutely dictatorial powers were given to them, their enactments, decrees, and orders were made equal in effect to those of the political authorities Thus the whole enormous empire, with its great towns and its little villages, squares, and streets, became the workshop, blocks of houses and asphalt surfaces became the " great canvas " of the new art, and the living mass itself the material for artistic experiments

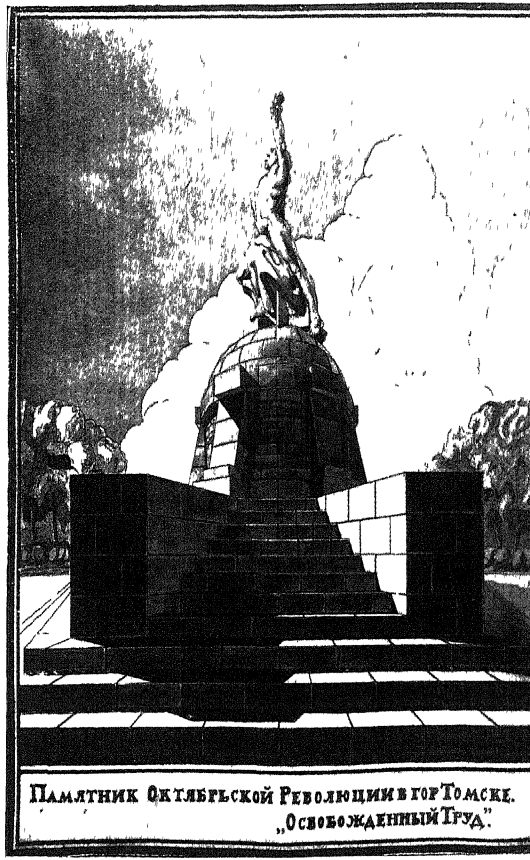
" Enough of lukewarm whining,
Throw off your rusty chains
The streets are our brush,
The squares our palette "

These proud lines of the revolutionary poet Maiakovski were more than a pious wish, they represented reality and achievement

In the period which immediately succeeded the upheaval the monumentality aimed at was at first expressed in a very primitive emphasis of material size At that time, when the important thing was to produce with the greatest possible speed means of expression for the modern world order, to establish without delay a " cultural superstructure " suited to the revolutionary social order, it was impossible to wait until new artistic forms could be organically developed Therefore, the old principles of sculpture, painting, and architecture were retained for the moment, and an attempt was made to embody the collective idea in an artistic form merely by working in the traditional styles on a gigantic scale—as it were, by multiplying the format by an indefinite factor Monstrous monuments, which compelled public attention by their mere size, were to bring before men's eyes, in the most impressive way, the beginning of a new epoch in history



PLAN FOR A MONUMENT TO THE COMMUNIST REVOLUTION "THE COLOSSUS OF IRON"



PLAN FOR A REVOLUTIONARY MONUMENT IN TOMSK

POLISH VIK "MONUMENTAL ART"
Portrait of Lenin hewn in the rock

GIGANTIC STATUES OF MARX AND ENGELS CONSTRUCTED IN CLAY IN 1918 AS "MONUMENTAL PROPAGANDA"

One of the first revolutionary measures of the Bolsheviks was to remove all existing monuments of bourgeois standard and taste, or, where this presented too many difficulties, to cover them with red draperies In their stead new monuments were set up on the great centres of traffic in glorification of the Revolution As these had to be made with the greatest possible speed they were mostly of clay, plaster, or, in the most favourable conditions, of alabaster. Like gigantic snowmen there sprang up overnight, at that time, statues of the revolutionary heroes which were intended to win the masses over to communist ideas

The instigator of this " propaganda by monuments " was Lenin, who wanted to create a kind of revolutionary *Siegesallee* (Victory Avenue) with the watchword that art must serve propaganda. The first monument of the kind to be erected was the memorial to Radishev, a revolutionary of the time of Katharine the Second; this was soon followed by statues of Shevstenko, Herzen, Chernishevski, Bauman, and Stenka Rassin, as well as by numerous representations of Marx, Engels, and, finally, of Lenin. But the erection of these sculptures was carried out in so amateurish a fashion that, as Lunacharski relates, Lenin himself was said to have been shocked when he saw the statues for the first time on the Moscow streets Many of the statues were so unrecognizable that they had to be supplied with explanatory inscriptions; and they were almost all made of quite impermanent material and so perished in a short time. It is true that the whole Victory Avenue was conceived of from the first merely as a kind of mighty advertisement and had no claim to immortal value; but the life of some of these monuments was, even so, too limited. they began to crumble as soon as they were set up, or were simply washed away by downpours of rain.

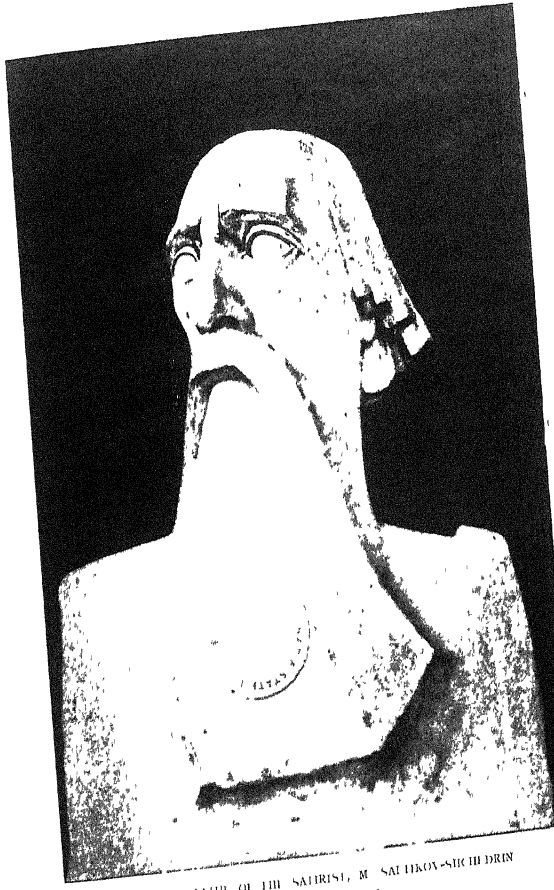
All the other artistic products of this first " heroic-monumental period " were also merely of a temporary nature. Great decorations meant to glorify the Revolution were put up on all available wall space; whole rows of houses were painted with enormous frescoes or adorned with *bas-reliefs*, which also were quite temporary, and had the effect of monstrous posters. Other house fronts again were hung with gigantic panels, often from thirty to forty-five feet high, or covered with painted posters and appeals in enormous letters, in which the harshly contrasting, astounding, and stirring were emphasized as much as possible.

All these frescoes, reliefs, panels, and posters related the latest events of the Revolution in an emotional or a satirical form. Particular importance was assigned to caricature, as the result of a scientific analysis carried out by prominent Bolshevik scholars into the nature of the " revolutionary laugh." " The attention," it is stated in one of these works, " which is stored up in the human brain after con-

centration on an object, may, on further investigation of the thing considered and recognition of its valuelessness, be dissolved in laughter. Laughter is thus a sign of the recognition of the valuelessness of a thing, an attribute of superiority. Laughter is, therefore, a weapon which can destroy an opponent, and which, if systematically used by a gifted mind, may become terrible "

At this time a Russian town must literally have been so covered from end to end, from top to bottom, with pictures and inscriptions, that not a spot of " untreated " wall space remained Even the walls and mirrors of the great hotels in the first year of the upheaval bore satirical drawings, mottoes, and quotations. As it was important to bring all the utensils of daily life into the service of communist propaganda, even plates, cups, glasses, and matchboxes were supplied with inscriptions and pictures of a revolutionary nature It was thought that by recasting everything down to the smallest details, a new monumentalization of the whole picture of life would be attained, every part being a member of the totality to be created. However inartistic, in principle, the notion of making the whole world a gigantic poster may have been, it must be acknowledged that the attempt led in individual cases to new and delightful artistic forms Special mention should be made of the work of the former Imperial Pottery Manufactory, where the old world-famed tradition of ceramic art was placed at the service of Bolshevik propaganda The inspiration and soul of this new State porcelain factory was S V Chekhonin, who has been the head of its painting department since 1917 He has produced a number of valuable and beautiful ceramic works The creations of Madame Chekhotin are interesting too, especially as this artist really neither paints nor draws, but merely aims at bold and charming combinations of colours. Almost all the products of the State Pottery Manufactory are in one way or other brought into the service of communist or anti-religious propaganda, you find cups with the inscription, " The brotherhood between the Russian and the German," or " The Red Image of the Saints," or " Socialism " This last cup shows typical figures of the time of the upheaval and bears the device· " The present day revolutionary idea is socialism, the religion of men is an earthly religion without a heaven." The letters of this device are composed of figures, trees, and similar motives Generally, orientalized decoration is preferred, primitive forms, mostly taken from Russian peasant art, bright, almost crude, but tasteful combinations of colours

The State Pottery Manufactory also produced a number of little sculptures which likewise were intended to serve the purposes of propaganda Statuettes of workers and red soldiers were made; a number of such figures were formed into a peculiar set of chess-



GIGANTIC STATUE OF THE SATIRIST, M. SALTIKOV-SHCHEDRIN
by N. Tsaltovratski

A PANEL

by Nathan Altmann, used as a decoration in the Moscow October Festival

DECORATION OF A PUBLIC BUILDING

A PORTRAIT OF LENIN IN FLOWERS

men, these chessmen were given a propagandist character by making the opposing parties not black and white, but red and white, the colours of the Revolution and the counter-revolution, while the squares of the chessboard were also red and white

The surfaces of all means of transport, the sides of motor-wagons, railway carriages, and ships, were also gaily painted with revolutionary pictures The motive of the Government in expressly ordering the decoration of all sorts of vehicles was that these were particularly appropriate for carrying the communist agitation into the remotest provinces of the Empire A special commission was entrusted with the task of organizing this so-called " thither-rushing propaganda " in the most efficient way, and with supplying vans or steamers with pictures and mottoes adapted to the mind of the rural population Later, propaganda trains were systematically sent through the country, taking with them travelling theatres, art exhibitions, and reading rooms, for the purpose of spreading communist culture. These propaganda trains and ships, which bore paintings on every available spot, were regarded as the real pioneer work of Bolshevism in Bukhara and Turkestan, in the Far East, on the Chinese frontiers, and on the shores of the Arctic Sea

2

However great the importance of all these productions may have been for purposes of propaganda, it is impossible to ascribe any objective artistic value whatever to the painted rows of houses, ships, and railway carriages. The " new character of proletarian art " extolled as " monumental " had, on the contrary, brought about an exceedingly primitive and amateurish conception of the nature of the monumental, for the " heroic " frescoes and plaster statues had nothing in common with true monumentality but their great size, their mammoth-like absolute dimensions. Considered as " cultural flowers of the new order of society " they could symbolize nothing but the rapid spread of infantile sensations, a fact which must have soon become clear even in Russia, in spite of all the prescribed enthusiasm.

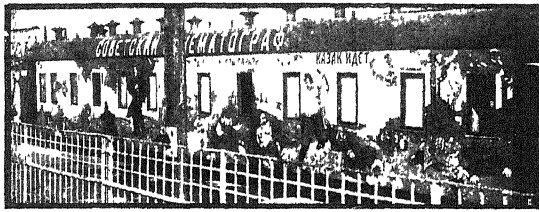
Singularly enough, however, it was neither the unfavourable verdict of every normal human being nor the temporary nature of these " works of art " in itself which brought this extraordinary period to an ignominious and rapid close. It was the radical " left artists," who boldly and openly pronounced a damning verdict on this kind of revolutionary art, and explained that all these productions, though it was possible to put up with them in early days, were really inconsistent with the true spirit of the Revolution. They supported their views with the argument that such work was nothing but a

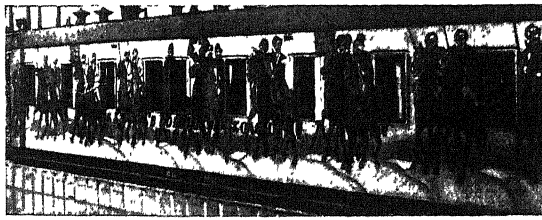
naive and crude distortion of the old artistic forms; but these latter originated in the bourgeois world, and were thus to be condemned in every shape and form New enactments, decrees, and orders were issued, proclaiming other paths for the " true proletarian art "

The new art was also to emphasize and stress the monumental, but not merely by the exaggerated magnifying of old traditional forms Everything handed down from the bourgeois world must be completely demolished before it would be possible to proceed to the creation of a new revolutionary art at all The political revolution was the model it, too, had begun by utterly destroying the old forms of society as an absolutely necessary step towards establishing a new organization In the view of these extremists a Bolshevik art was unthinkable without the elementary principle of destruction; all attempts to construct it directly must suffer shipwreck, if the preliminary condition of " destruction on a grand scale " were not present. Even Pissarev, a well-known critic of the 'sixties, put forward similar views. He proclaimed that, in order to create the new man, everything old must be ruthlessly abolished. " Everything that can be smashed must be steadily smashed, only what survives the smashing is of any value; everything that crumbles in pieces is useless lumber In any case, lay about you in all directions, that will and can do no harm "

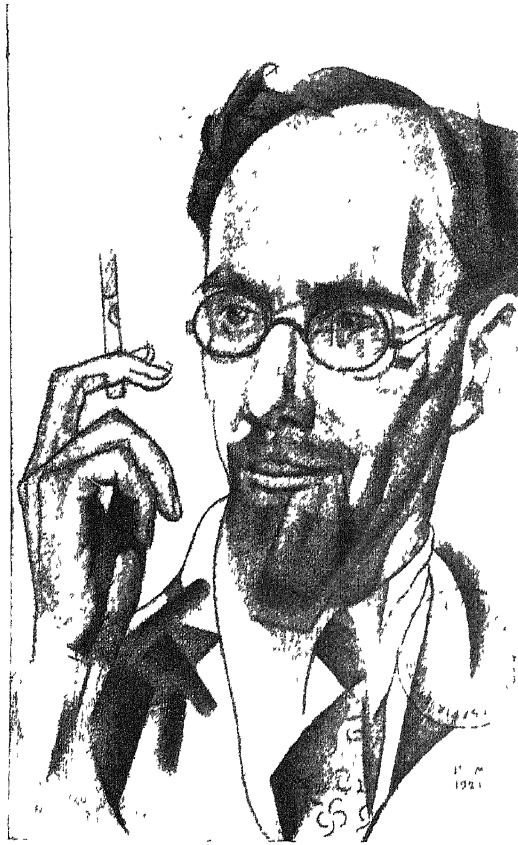
Just as political Bolshevism aimed at purging society from all anarchical " accidentals," and at building it up on an abstract rationalistic structure of the working masses, the newly created revolutionary art also decided to root out everything " accidental and incalculable," and to replace it by a rational organization of the material. Only in this way could the new art really become an adequate " superstructure " on the collective organization of the proletariat.

While futurism appeared to be the most appropriate expression of the destructive, it was believed that the most fitting style for the new " rational organization of matter " was to be found in cubism. It was, therefore, at once proclaimed that " cubo-futurism " was the only true proletarian art, which for the future had to be regarded as the most significant means of translating the revolution into the sphere of graphic representation This " cubo-futurism " also seemed the quickest way to fulfil the demand for monumentality. The " dynamic of revolutionary destruction which derived directly from the cosmic " and, in particular, the desire to attain a new " ideological superstructure " required universality as the ultimate object of destruction The negations of futurism, completed by the abstract tendency of cubism, resulted in that " abstract deformation " which was to be the basis and the chief watchword of the new trend in art. This " abstract deformation " had to assume monumental





PAINTED RAILWAY CARRIAGES USED IN BOLSHEVIK PROPAGANDA



ABRAM TEROS, THE BOLSHEVIK ART CRITIC
(Portrait by I. Annenkov)

dimensions; but it was directed against the whole accustomed image of the surrounding world, all its forms and lines, colours and tones, right to its very core.

Thanks to the extraordinary powers at the disposal of the propagation of the new cubo-futurism, there was absolutely no boundary or limit to its activity, all the more because " destruction " formed one of the principles of the revolutionary political policy, and fitted without any difficulty into the universal fanaticism of negation A start was made with the old monuments and buildings First of all the Alexander column in front of the Winter Palace was " destroyed "; this was soon followed by the rest of the monuments in Moscow, Petersburg, and the various provincial cities This destruction did not, however, always take the form of demolition or removal of the sculptures, frequently huge frameworks of wood or canvas were erected round them which crossed the lines of the old monument with arcs, parallelograms, and all sorts of oblique-angled figures. The walls of the long rows of houses were also painted with cubist colour scrawls, and thus " deformed ", instead of the earlier naive satirical panels and posters, cubically heaped up forms appeared everywhere, which not only destroyed the effect of a surface, but all impression of space altogether. The engines and carriages of the propaganda trains, the funnels and masts of the ships were also robbed of rational cohesion by wooden parallelograms and sectors, even the propagandist monuments of revolutionary heroes were not spared. On the contrary, in this case particularly strict measures were taken to leave nothing conventional undestroyed and ruthlessly to " deform in an abstract way " every trace of traditional heroic forms.

It is not surprising that these fanatical methods roused considerable opposition, not only among " conservative " artists, but even among the very working masses for whose benefit it was all being done. More than once the mass raised a regular uproar when they saw their heroes and gods made completely unrecognizable in this cubo-futuristic way. After the setting up of Boris Korolev's ultra-modern Bakunin monument the responsible authorities, conscious of the unpopularity of such experiments, for long did not dare to unveil the statue at all, and kept it permanently behind a wooden partition. But some poor people in the cold winter days carried away the boards for firewood, and one fine morning, to the general consternation, the unveiled monument became visible, and the sight of it caused a real revolt of the populace. The general indignation was so great that, rather than face it, the political authorities preferred to have the monument immediately demolished.

Once all works of art were suitably " deformed " the idea soon followed that a similar action should be applied to Nature itself;

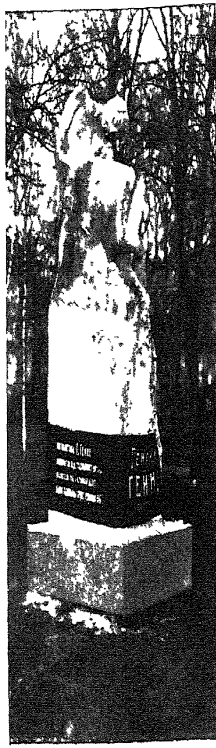
the surroundings of the proletariat were to be different in kind from the comfortable sentimental Nature of the bourgeoisie. So, at a communist festival in Moscow, the lawns, flower-beds, and trees in front of the " Great Theatre " were coloured purple and red by sprinkling with powdered colouring matter.

The unbridled fury of revolutionary destruction did not stop at cubo-futurism Ever more radical " isms " followed tumbling over each other in a rush New prophets declared that there were " bourgeois " remnants concealed even in cubo-futurism and that form and colour themselves must be abolished Only geometrically designed planes and forms were consistent with the revolutionary spirit, then " suprematism " became the artistic form of the proletariat But immediately new men appeared who condemned " suprematism " too, and announced loudly that " counter-relief " was the only true art, for all bourgeois artistic materials and elements, such as colours, pencils, charcoal, even lines and planes, must be abandoned, and only articles of daily use, scraps of newspapers, fragments of glass, box lids, hair, electric lamps, screws, nails, or old gas piping must be used to produce revolutionary works of art. The true Bolshevik work of art must be produced by the moulding or glueing together of such materials of revolutionary everyday existence.

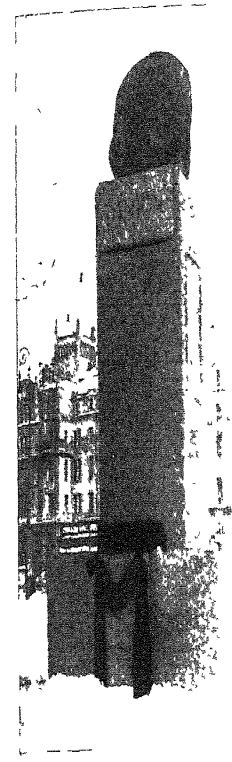
But besides the adherents of these abstruse groups, it must be acknowledged there also appeared in Soviet Russia artists who, although they too followed the new principles, nevertheless seem quite comprehensible and valuable to non-Bolshevik lovers of art, perhaps just because these men are not merely the upholders of the views of a political party, but real artists besides. Chief among these is the painter Iuni Annenkov. He works in accordance with futurist principles, and likes to unite various moments in an event in one and the same drawing, but he contrives to find a synthesis for these elements. His portraits purport to be " excerpts from the various expressions of a face, from the biography of the man portrayed " Russian criticism praises in especial his ability in bringing small and apparently subsidiary details into relation with the object of the picture and making them reveal character more intimately. He does not distinguish in any way the animate from the inanimate, and he treats every trifle surrounding his subject as a vital part of the whole. He loves the household belongings of man, all the little fragments of life, every scrap, every little fold or wart on a face acquires with him a significance of its own

Among the few real artists of revolutionary Russia must also be numbered the painters, Konchalovski, Petrov-Vodkin, the designer and book-illustrator, D I. Mitrokhin, who works on Italian and German models, and also the etcher and wood-engraver, V. D.

MONUMENT TO BAKUNIN IN "CUBOFUTURISTIC" STYLE
(by the sculptor B. Korolev)



MONUMENT TO HEINRICH HEINE



DANTON MONUMENT

Falileev, who is strongly influenced by the Japanese. Among the wood-engravers there is no doubt that N. F. Favorski is first He is celebrated as the founder of an entirely new technique of wood engraving, Russian art criticism regards him as " the only great master of an abstract xylography," a " cubist before the discovery of cubism " Favorski is called in Russia the " Cézanne of modern wood-engraving."

P. Kuznetsov again is the artistic discoverer of the Russian East. His pictures of Bukhara and Turkestan are, as far as design and colour are concerned, the pride of the newer Russian art.

The mystic painter and designer, Chekrigin, who tried to commit suicide at the age of twenty-three, occupies a quite special position. In him, a great community honours to-day not only one of the greatest artists, but also, and even more, the last representative of that peculiar mystical Slav thought as seen in F F. Fedorov, V Solov'ev, and F M Dostoevski Seized with a " holy obsession," he attempted in many hundreds of drawings to embody Fedorov's ideas of the " resurrection of the flesh." Of Chekrigin's work the critic, A. Bakushinski, asserts that it represents " a deeply perceived artistic aspect " which expresses in a way hitherto undreamt-of " both mortal sorrow over the catastrophes of the present," and " exalted joy in the prophetic anticipation of the new man "

The Moscow art critic and publisher, K. Abramov, has done great service in furthering true art in Russia Unconfused by all " revolutionary " fashions, he has always managed not only to carry through work of the old authentic art in Bolshevik Russia, but also with great skill to pick out anything really valuable from the general confusion of modernism

In any case, these undoubtedly important artists, critics, and publishers, even although they are highly esteemed by Russian connoisseurs, are not representatives of revolutionary art. At the present time the adherents of the super-modern schools are entirely dominating, and dispute with each other for the " revolutionary palm of victory."

Since, in the general chaos, none of the new groups could rise to sole mastery, a furious strife of all against all flamed up, in the course of which, by the side of individual, really valuable artistic creations, continual new and ever newer revolutionary " isms " were belched forth. " Imagists " fought against " colour-dynamists," " tectonic primitives " waged bitter war against " cosmists," until finally the " objectless expressionists " appeared and exposed all their predecessors as disguised bourgeois.

But, however hostile all these new tendencies are to each other where the positive is concerned, they are nevertheless united in their sincere endeavour to destroy the old artistic forms. For these

experiments, although they make an impression of amateurishly frantic confusion on the outsider, nevertheless unquestionably form part of the historic picture of the Russian Revolution.

The attempt of the State authorities from the very outset to bring about a close relation between their policy and artistic development was not a merely superficial thing It was an inner necessity which drove the State to futurizing art. political form and artistic form were merely the common expression of an historical event in different spheres Thus the revolutionary historians of art, like Abram Efros, were not so far wrong in regarding those abstruse tendencies in art which appeared before the war as the first signs of the later political revolution. It was only at the Revolution that futurism, cubism, and expressionism attained their true historical meaning, only then that the disciples of Maiakovski were vindicated, who, in the time of the Tsardom, used to proceed through the streets of Moscow and Petersburg wearing orange blouses, carnival trousers, with rouged cheekbones and gay seals on their brows, clenching their fists in vague threats to overthrow the worthy bourgeoisie. In their very absurdity these seeming fools made the first revolutionary protest against bourgeois life and bourgeois art, and thus afforded a prophetic glimpse of coming events Futurism, which preached eternal dynamics, the continual movement of all things, thus long ago anticipated the upheaval, just as cubism, by a systematic deforming of things, tried to lay bare the social structure of society. Finally, expressionism for the first time struck the note of that pitiful abstraction of the world, and sang those hymns to formlessness which later became a political and artistic dogma of the Bolshevists.

The " art of destruction " thus unquestionably had its own mission of great political importance to fulfil in the revolutionary reformation of Russia, corresponding to " militant communism," which also aimed at destruction in economic policy. But the artistic tactics of negation could not last for ever, and had to be replaced by new methods as soon as a radical clearance of the old conceptions of art had been effected Then came the moment at which the question of something higher and more valuable arose, which must be put in the place of tradition. Now in all seriousness was it necessary to create the new proletarian art in whose name all the " old rubbish " had been cleared away, " the style of permanence and eternal beauty " corresponding to the " superior social form of communism."

3

It was an architect named Tatlin, who made the first attempt to attain a permanent proletarian style of monumental importance, an attempt which really arose out of a protest against the " monument

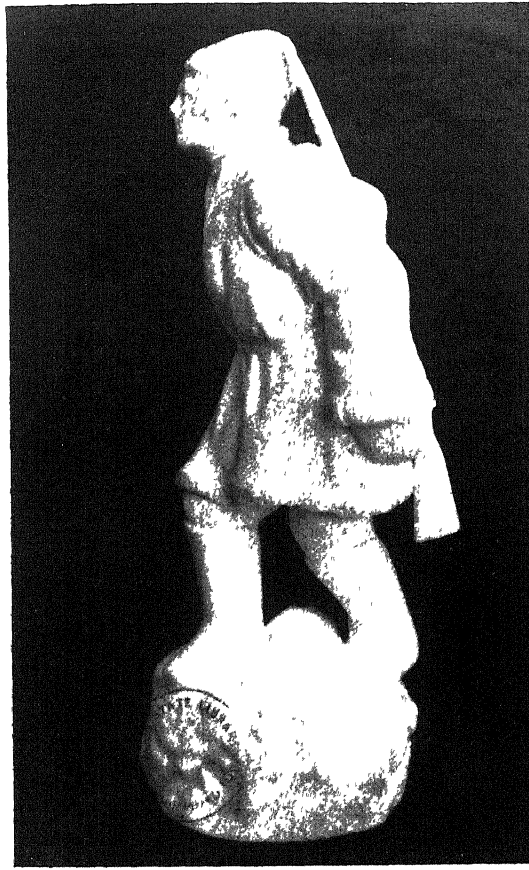


FIGURE IN PORCELAIN OF A RED SOLDIER MADE IN THE FORMES IMPERIAL POTTERY FACTORY

"THE REVOLUTIONARY"

Figure in porcelain made in the former Imperial Pottery Factory

propaganda " as practised hitherto Tatlin pointed out that all the " isms," however radical they might appear, stopped at superficialities, and had not revolutionized the innermost meaning of every work of art, and above all its mission What was the use of dissecting monuments into cubes and planes, which have external " deformation," so long as the mission and essence of these monuments themselves corresponded to an entirely bourgeois idea. Was it not the same evil and notorious hero-worship of the bourgeoisie which was conspicuous in all these cubistically treated monuments? What had the collective man, the new proletarian culture of the masses, to do with this sort of reverence for individual personalities? Every cubo-futuristic triumphal avenue, however radical it might be, was really a piece of bourgeois art, for it cultivated individual heroism, and thus denied the results of the proletarian view of history.

" Figures of gods and heroes," says Tatlin, " are not consistent with the modern conception of history; they are unfitted to symbolize the present age, which has to do with mile long columns of proletarians. At the best, they enforce the character, feeling, and method of thought of a revolutionary hero, but they must fail to give expression to the concentrated sentiment of a collective thousand-headed mass. They may, it is true, reveal the configuration of the type; but the mass, which in itself is richer, more vital, and more organic, concretizes and levels this. Even in its static aspect, this form is opposed to the spirit of the time, and therefore affords only a limited means of expression. Further, the effect of such monuments for purposes of propaganda, in the midst of the noise, the life, and the motion in the wide streets of the modern city, is very doubtful These watchers raised aloft on granite pedestals may themselves see a great deal, but they are not noticed by others and attract no attention. The form in which they are chiselled arose at a time when people at the best moved about on mules; but the telephone wire of modern war makes the antique hero ridiculous, the tramway standards replace the obelisks of old days. The modern monument must reflect the social life of the city, the city itself must live in it. Only the rhythm of the metropolis, of factories and machines, together with the organization of the masses, can give the impulse to the new art. Therefore, the forms of revolutionary propagandist sculpture must go beyond the representation of the individual, and spring from the spirit of collectivism."

For these reasons Tatlin recommends the " mechanical image," the " monument of the machine," as the only adequately powerful expression of the present, which, by its dynamic agitation, its technical rationalism, and its utilitarian importance, can most readily express the corresponding features of the time. But the machine is in the closest organic connection with industrial development, and

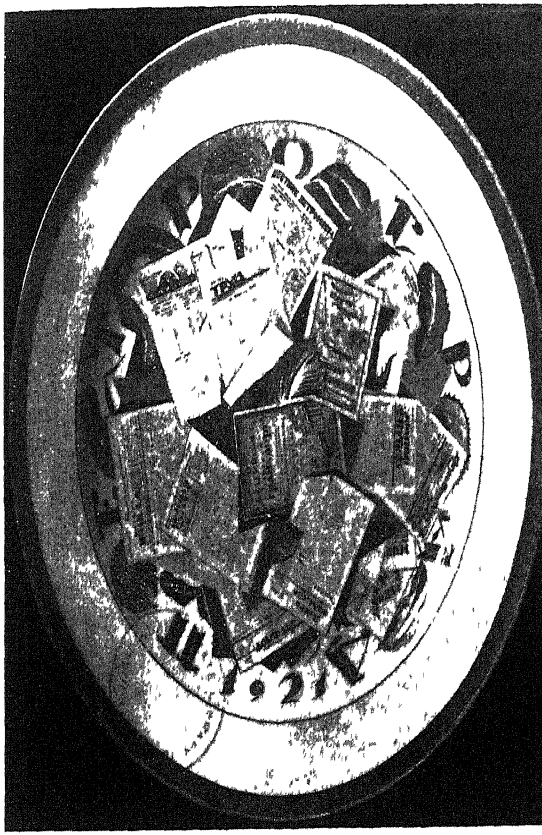
thus with the proletariat itself; the adaptation to its ends and its rhythm thus represent the true spirit of the proletariat.

In accordance with the principle of utilitarian importance, the "monument of the machine," planned by Tatlin himself, was to fulfil, not only on aesthetic, but also a practical function Radio and telegraph stations, placed in the interior of the monument, were to maintain permanent contact with revolutionary reality This movement has been of decisive importance for the further artistic development of Soviet Russia, it forms the first attempt, although on quite crude lines, to work out the basic principles of a new constructive art, and so to found a "dynamic-monumental architecture." Henceforth, the slogan was that monumentality must be conceived, not as hitherto, statically, but dynamically, in accordance with the new spirit of the revolutionary age This modern style was to be attained by the endeavour to intensify and resolve the energies inherent in the material and the constructions proceeding therefrom into a movement of all forms

The idea that the material should not be treated as dead matter, but as the expression of the energies latent in it, thus played the most important and significant part in this "dynamic monumental art" The material attributes of the material used should also express the profound sense of the collective Tedious scientific, technical, and artistic investigations were made into the question of what building material was most useful to symbolize this proletarian culture. Of all the contradictory views on the subject, those of Trotski may be regarded as the most interesting. He proclaimed that metal is the foundation of scientific industrial organization, and, consequently, it should also be the material of the new proletarian style in contrast to the past wood culture. The coming age should be the age of iron, concrete, and glass

In agreement with this view of the most prominent Bolshevik leader, the representatives of all artistic schools later concurred in rejecting stone and wood as bourgeois, "counter-revolutionary" material, and in recommending metal, concrete, and glass for the purposes of proletarian architecture In addition to the use of "these revolutionary building materials," a heightened dynamics and the dissolution of all the static principles hitherto observed were to help to express the new age.

Thereafter, artistic feeling gravitated more and more towards a "technical" architecture, which further had to be accepted as the most fitting expression of the million-headed proletarian consciousness, as the ideal, vital, even classical artistic form of the "dynamic monumental style." Two grandiose schemes were regarded as the turning-point in the development of Russian art, Tatlin's scheme for a monument to the Third International in Petersburg, and the



CHINA PLATE USED FOR COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA

PROPAGANDA CHINA PLATE FROM THE FORMER IMPERIAL FACTORY

plan for the " Palace of Labour " in Moscow. The first was drafted on the commission of the Central Office for Graphic Art in the People's Commissariat for Education, and, according to the statements of a Bolshevik historian of art, is to consist of a union of three great glass chambers, connected by a system of vertical axes and spirals.

" These chambers are arranged vertically above one another, and surrounded by various harmonious structures By means of special machinery they must be kept in perpetual motion, but at different rates of speed The lowest chamber is cubiform, and turns on its axis once a year, it is to be used for legislative purposes, in future the conferences of the International and the meetings of congresses and other bodies will be held in it. The chamber above this is pyramidal in shape, and makes one revolution a month, administrative and other executive bodies will hold their meetings there Finally, the third and highest part of the building is in the shape of a cylinder, and turns on its axis once a day This part of the building will be used chiefly for information and propaganda, that is, as a bureau of information, for newspapers, and also as the place whence brochures and manifestos will be issued. Telegraphs, radio-apparatus, and lanterns for cinematograph performances will be installed here."

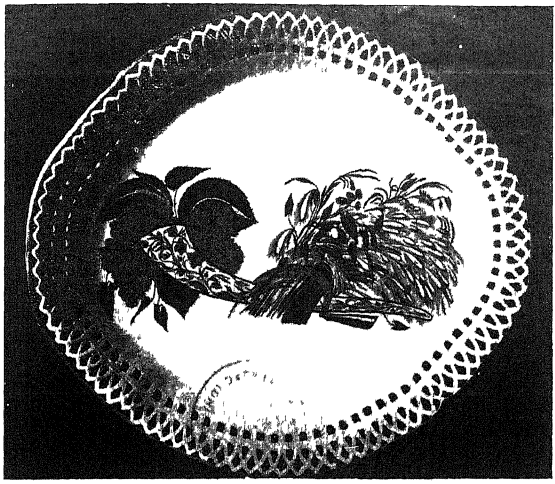
Not content with the technical marvel of revolving rooms, Tatlin also conceived a system of double walls with air-tight chambers between them, on the plan of the thermos flask, so as to maintain a constant temperature in the building The individual parts of the building, and also the side rooms, were to be connected by a complicated system of lifts, which were to be adapted to the various rates of revolution Apart from these extraordinary technical novelties, the monument had further a special ideological importance; here, too, it will be best to reproduce textually as far as possible the comments of the historian of art quoted above:

" The whole monument rests on two main axes which are closely connected. In the direction of these axes an upward movement is accomplished on the one hand, but, on the other hand, this is crossed transversely at each of its points by the movement of the spirals. The junction of these two dynamic forces, which are by nature opposed to each other, is intended to express annihilation; but the spirals turning in the opposite direction, by the upward effort of the main structure, produces a dynamic form, which is moved by a system of ever tense, ever agitated axes cutting each other (!).

The form will conquer matter, the force of attraction, and seeks a way out with the help of the most elastic and volatile lines existing —with the help of the spirals These are full of movement, elasticity and speed, stiffly stretched like the muscles of a smith hammering iron. In itself the use of spirals for monumental architecture means an enrichment of the composition Just as the triangle, as an image of general equilibrium, is the best expression of the Renaissance (1) so the spiral is the most effective symbol of the modern spirit of the age. The countering of gravitation by buttresses is the purest classical form of statics, the classical form of dynamics, on the other hand, is the spiral. While the dynamic line of bourgeois society, aiming at possession of the land and the soil, was the horizontal, the spiral, which, rising from the earth, detaches itself from all animal, earthly, and oppressing interests, forms the purest expression of humanity set free by the Revolution The bourgeois social order developed an animal life on earth, tilled the soil, and there erected shops, arcades, and banks, the life of the new humanity rises ever higher and higher above the ground At the same time, the arrangement of the contents of these architectural forms signifies their usefulness Most of the elements of architecture hitherto in use possessed no practical importance, and remained unorganized. To-day the principle of organization must rule and penetrate all art. The monument unites legislative initiative with the executive and with information, to each of these functions a position in space has been assigned corresponding to its nature In this way, and also by means of the chief building material used, glass, the purity and clearness of initiative and its freedom from all material encumbrance is symbolically indicated.

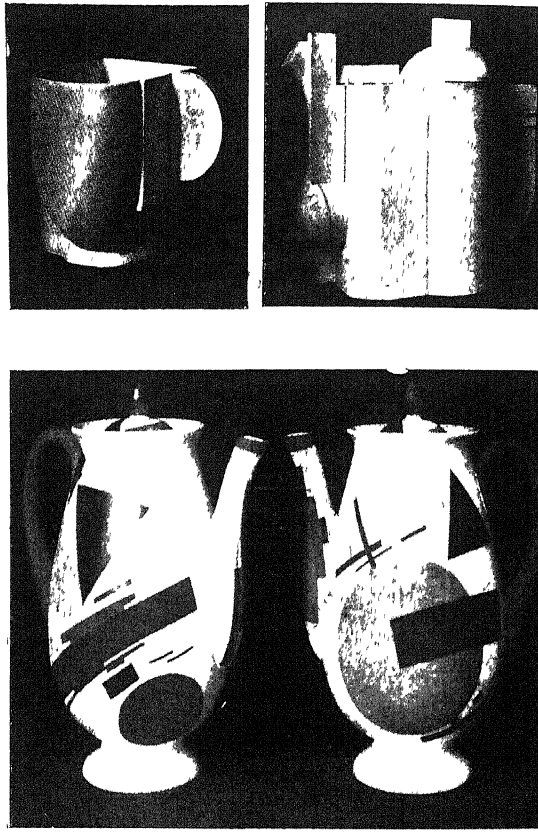
"Just as the product of the number of oscillations and the wave-length is the spatial measure of sound, so the proportion between glass and iron is the measure of the material rhythm. By the union of these two fundamentally important materials, a compact and imposing simplicity and, at the same time, relationship are expressed since these materials, for both of which fire is the creator of life form the elements of modern art. By their union, rhythms must be created of mighty power, as though an ocean were being born. By the translation of these forms into reality, dynamics will be embodied in unsurpassable magnificence, just as the pyramids once and for all expressed the principle of statics."

The second great plan of this kind was that of a Labour Palace in Moscow. To give an idea of the magnificent dimensions of the building, it will suffice to say that it is to be nearly four hundred feet high, and that its chief hall is calculated to accommodate eight thousand people, the representatives of the working masses from all



SOVIET POTTERY
by Chekonin

SOVIET POTTERY



"SUPREMATIST" POTTERY FROM THE FORMER IMPERIAL POTTERY FACTORY
The models are by K. Malevich, the decoration by I. Chakhnik

over the world. On the roof, a special landing-stage for aeroplanes, a radio-station, and a plant for sky signs on the largest scale are to be constructed.

K Zelinski writes of this scheme in words which throw light on the deepest motives of the new endeavour "The style of this palace," he says, "which is the product of historical dynamics, represents the expression of the Revolution This monument is not only to be a great building adapted to house a number of State and other institutions, it is also to have an inherent moral and educational significance; it is intended to be a symbol of the Revolution The Palace must show a new proletarian style, and, further, from the technical point of view, be completely in harmony with the age. Both functions are in essence merely two different sides of one and the same historical problem Architects still think all too often of buildings of stone with wooden windows, and doors, woodwork, and rooms huddled together, without considering that each material is limited in its constructive possibilities, and, consequently, also in its suitability for satisfying human needs. Stone is dead, hinders the development of architecture, and thus becomes a factor of reaction. Immobile in its dynamic possibilities, stone can no longer keep pace with the tempo of our life which is rapidly becoming dynamized. To-day men still drive about everywhere on vehicles, to-morrow, however, the pavements themselves will begin to roll. Then a colossal brick building, such as we have hitherto been accustomed to, will no longer be able to accommodate the tens and hundreds of thousands of men who will surge up on the 9th November to the Pantheon of the Revolution Its walls will be too inanimate and immobile, its doors too narrow, and its halls too dead to the cry from the hundred thousand voices of the enthusiastic people.

"Why do we not erect an enormous building with movable walls of glass and aluminium on a gigantic steel foundation? Such a palace could, at need, accommodate enormous masses of men, could open up into huge halls, and bring enormous audiences on the different platforms close to the speakers. We use new building materials: steel, reinforced concrete, duraluminium, glass, and asbestos, materials towards which our whole culture is irresistibly moving The acoustics in the great halls must be artificially improved by electric membranes; by the help of radio-telephones we will succeed literally in making walls begin to speak. If it prove necessary, walls, roofs, and floors must be made transparent Electric waves will wander through the glass corridors, set motors in motion, and put all the necessary machinery to work.

"Nothing in all this is technically impossible; three-quarters of it has already been realized in the West; to translate the remaining quarter into fact shall be our task. Architects and builders, rise to

the social demands of the coming day, adapt yourselves to the course and meaning of history, build movement[1]"

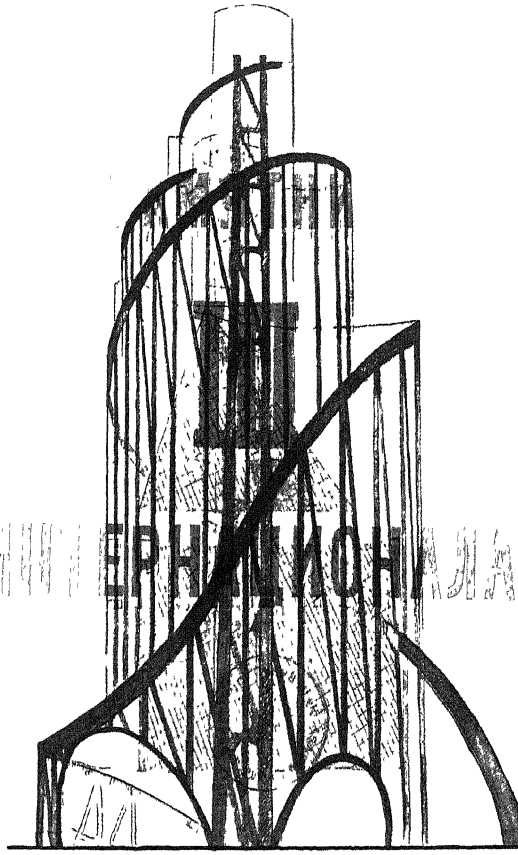
4

The logical consequence of dreams of this kind is the treatment of the creation of a new style of building as no longer the work of architects but of engineers. Thus in a discussion of this very "Palace of Labour," an engineer named Lapshin put forward the demand that people must finally get rid of the idea of architecture as the artistic shaping of a construction as against its technical organization. In his view, there is no such thing as the art of building or architecture *per se*, for the erection of modern monumental buildings it is not necessary to call in artists at all, but only technical experts

As so often in the case of "revolutionary" statements of this kind, it must be emphasized here too that Western Europe has long been acquainted with all these ideas put forward by the Russians as completely new and subversive, and even got beyond some of them many years ago. In particular, the last-mentioned attempt to consider architecture solely from the standpoint of its technical adaptation to its ends, and to hand over its stylistic development to engineers, was much talked about in Germany about fifteen years ago, and still has one or two adherents there But, in the main, it has long been recognized to be the exaggeration of a principle not unsound in itself; all these attempts have long ago been as good as forgotten among us, and thus it is possible for the Russian revolutionaries to proclaim this idea, which in the last resort may be traced back to Gottfried Semper, as the peculiar achievement of proletarian culture.

By the "machine art" of Tatlin, the "moving monuments," and "dynamic monumental buildings," whose forms and rhythms are fitted for the new mechanical idols, the whole conception of Bolshevik art assumed a fundamentally different trend. In a number of decrees the forms of technical products, aeroplanes, skyscrapers, and ironclads were put forward as models, and rational construction was elevated to the criterion of aesthetic value.

In many of the "studios" and "workshops" of these new artists, the worship of the machine became more and more a strict religious cult. Along the wall are ranged peculiar constructions of iron, concrete, or wood, the statues of the new God. The walls themselves are covered over with drawings, which reflect the fact and form of the divinity in various positions. They are geometrical drawings which in their stiff lines recall for a moment primitive pictures of saints, as if they were labelled: "Holy ground plan A"



PROPOSAL FOR A MONUMENT TO THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL
by Tatlin (Front View)

' Holy turbo-generator B," or " Holy oxyhydrogen blow-pipe C." All these new " ikons " are intended to prove the truth and sublimity of the supreme being, whose law now rules the world, the machine

The people, too, who wander about these rooms, show in their eyes, their bearing, their whole awed and marvelling attitude, the typical signs of visionary faith in God. Even the style of their hair and dress has something of the ritual garb of the sectarians. For hours they stand marvelling and devout, as if absorbed in prayer, before the many constructions in iron and wood, the extraordinary drawings on the walls, and the peculiar new pictures of the saints of the church of the machine.

People were lost in ecstatic admiration for the overwhelming beauty of a telephone, a typewriter, or a locomotive, and proclaimed with unshakable conviction that these things were parts of the proletarian world style. But here, too, other revolutionists very soon appeared upon the scene, who regarded this stage of aesthetic consideration as also behind the times, and proclaimed that work adapted to its ends is itself art. From now on pupils in the workshop of the " left " artists were instructed how to make collapsible beds, folding chairs, transportable kiosks, and other things of the kind. It seemed then as if art were to be completely resolved into handicrafts, and artists, sculptors, and architects must become carpenters, fitters, and machine makers

This conception was nothing new in Russia. Chernishevski had already demanded that art should not only represent life, but form it. For him manual work was the starting-point of all art, and social utility the criterion of all artistic production. Thus aesthetics became a variety of utilitarian ethics and social politics, in accordance with the dogma, " Only what is of general interest in life can form the subject matter of art." In Chernishevski's view, the artist must always endeavour to curb his imagination, and to keep it close to reality, as the imagination can never be in a position to attain reality completely. He saw in art and science mere " handbooks for beginners in practical life and works of reference for those who have been schooled by life."

These already extreme ideas of Chernishevski were carried to absurdity by the Bolshevik moderns. Soon a new, still more radical school appeared, which aimed at overtrumping the artistic revolutionary spirit of the folding chair. The charge of concealing reactionary feeling was again laid at the door of the preceding period, because the utilitarian idea was a relapse to the bourgeois period of handicrafts, since collapsible beds could in no way express artistically the whole perceptive content of the proletariat. Utilitarian art, with its practically useful products, was at best but a small section of the new style still to be created, as were, too, all the other revolutionary

experiments which had " not spoken the last word on revolutionary art."

So once again they came to the point of treating all previous achievements as experiments and more or less successful spade work, and had once again to face the terrifying question, what was really to spring from all these beginnings? The need was again felt, this time more imperatively, for a permanent great style, a creative proletarian culture, which now was yearningly termed " left classicism."

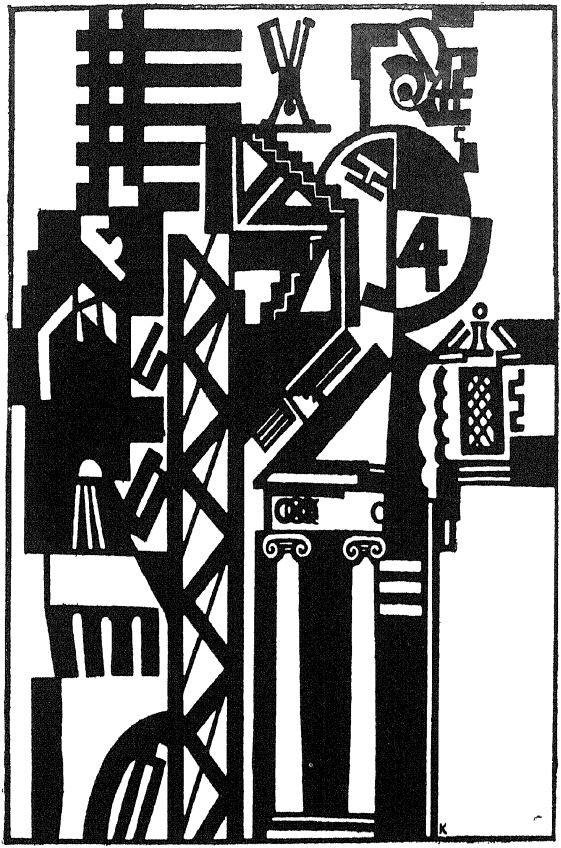
5

Since all attempts to find a really convincing formal expression proved vain, it was finally agreed to look for " left classicism " in a synthesis of all the previous revolutionary tendencies. The elements of the destructive art were to be admitted into the system of " left classicism " because they contained the absolutely necessary principle of analysis, without which a " complete purge " of all the remnants of earlier origin appeared impossible Cubism again had freed the essence of things from all external accident, and thus produced " absolute space," and thereby the preliminary condition for the " technical regrouping " now to be carried through, of this space itself Henceforth, the three dimensions were to be " geometrically clearly organized " and made visible in accordance with the social reorganization of the masses, which had been pushed to the furthest limits But the social order had been simplified and rebuilt after a plan of rationalistic construction Thus arose out of the entirely negative, space-annihilating cubism, a kind of new spatial organization, which was further propagated under the name of " constructivism."

Not less important was the task of assigning the place of " objectless expressionism " and " counter-relief art," in this concert of the " isms ", they were to free revolutionary mankind from all bourgeois concepts of subjective form and of art. Utilitarian art, in short, could give the liveliest stimulus to the final " left classicism," if the original notion behind it, which was a protest against the aesthetic in itself, were evidenced so that by " utilitarianism " should be understood " social utilitarianism," and individual utilitarian production could be replaced by a collective production.

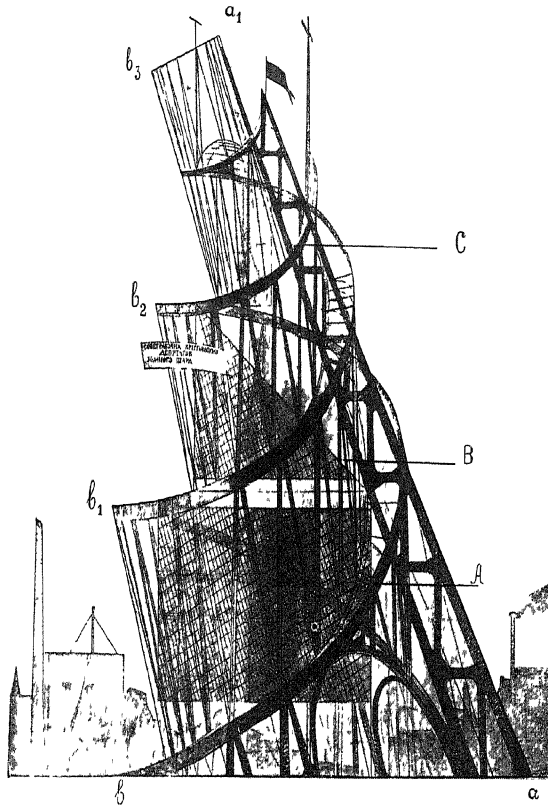
There still remained some slight objections against the expression " classicism," but when once they were overcome, nothing further stood in the way of proclaiming " left classicism " as the " only true revolutionary style." Unless a further new tendency shows itself at the last moment, " left classicism " may be asserted, until further notice, to be the final form of Bolshevik art.

It is declared to be the only true style because it completely corresponds to the " conscious conclusions " and the " great senti-



THE NEW REVOLUTIONARY STYLE—THE AMALGAMATION OF ALL THE "ISMS" WITH OLD ARCHITECTURAL "MOTIVES"

(Drawing by Kunski)



TATLIN'S PROPOSAL FOR A MONUMENT TO THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL

The rooms A, B and C, arranged vertically above one another, are of glass, and are intended to be kept in perpetual motion at varying rates of speed by a peculiar mechanical device

ment of the Revolution," because "left classicism" unites, binds, and condenses all special and individual aims, "all historical energies in the radius of the Revolution," into a common phenomenon, which is far "stronger, greater, mightier, and weightier" than any of the individual manifestations in itself. According to the manifesto composed by Abram Efros, the attempt to produce a new classicism was made because the fight for it is at the same time the fight for the poetry of the Revolution, and thus for the vitality of revolutionary art. "The Revolution is on the one hand the offspring, the child, and the inheritance of the war, on the other hand it creates our future, is our mother, and example. So far as the Revolution is a consequence and continuation of the war, it means negation and destruction, but, in its second aspect, it is the source of new forms of life to come, and is, therefore, the purest affirmation. All previous schools, like futurism or cubism, were causally connected with the war and functionally with the Revolution. It was only while the Revolution was passing through its first negative phase that these artistic currents could be regarded as the sole expression of the revolutionary spirit. As soon as it had to find the way to new heights, they had blindly and helplessly to acknowledge their impotence. They were masters of methods, but not of ideas; not one of them was able to fulfil in a really satisfactory way the meaning of the revolution, the task of positive new creation, and the striving towards a definite goal.

"Quite spontaneously in the living creation of living men, the onslaught of a new classicism made itself felt, just when the Revolution, having reached its goal, had to think of creating a new art in its own name. Now new motives of order, selection, and co-ordination were introduced into the chaos; out of the old and the new, a cosmos of higher habits was again to arise. Of the old, everything was taken over which had survived the war and the Revolution unhurt; of the new, everything which, after fulfilling its revolutionary work of destruction, was not exhausted and disintegrated. The Revolution thus also forms the starting point of a renewed and rejuvenated tradition.

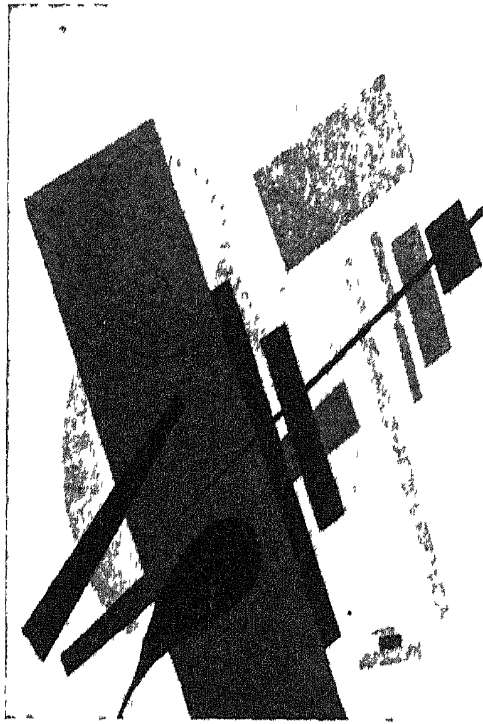
"In the depths of the human soul there is growing stronger and stronger every day the longing for clearness, harmony, and simplicity. Therefore, the modern classicists are striving towards a strictly conditioned form, exactly balanced in its constituent parts, and linked together. We are breathing again the air of classical tradition of the past, the century-old creations appear again clad in living green.

"Are we then imitating the old? Yes and no. It is true that we are striking the same chords, but we are singing different songs. 'Left classicism' has gone beyond the destructive methods of the

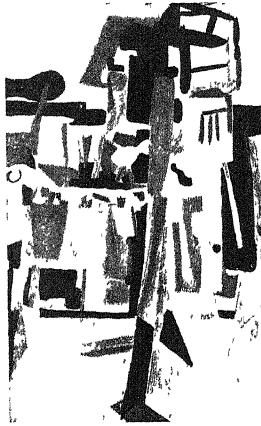
first revolutionary period, and from it has carefully taken over a new content for the old form of classical tradition. The inherited estate has been rejuvenated by the lightly moving futurist rhythms, by the weighty masses of cubism, and by the fiery glance of expressionistic objectlessness. But futurism, cubism, and expressionism are no longer the standard, but merely a material of style. On the threshold of our epoch a classical art again stands, and attracts every man of good will into its harmonious realm "

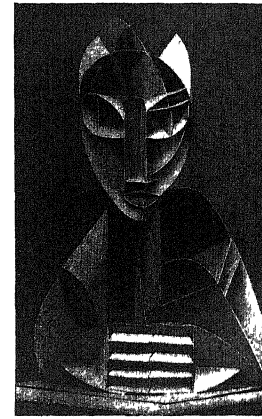
At the moment when the demand for a new classicism was raised, the necessity had already been recognized, on technical, constructive, and aesthetic grounds, of advancing to a monumental style which should be the result of a combination of technical, utilitarian, and artistic motives The problem thus arose of stylizing the rhythm of the present in a permanent expression within the limits of the existing material exigencies and conditions. The old squares and streets did not conform to either of the basic conditions of this new classicism, the complicated confusion of buildings and street features had nothing in common with technical utility or the rhythm of the collective man So a move was soon made, at least on paper and in models, to erect new settlements, towns, and villages which should be rationally, simply, and clearly planned, and so express the utilitarian construction of the mass life.

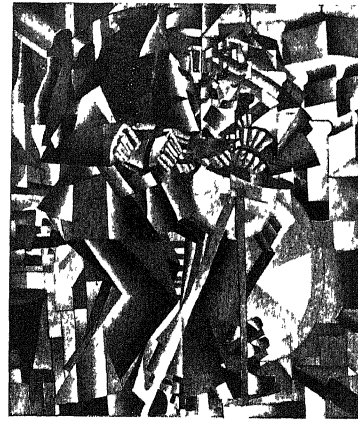
A group of young professors, led by Ladovski, established a special department for modern architecture at the Moscow Academy. At first, an attempt was made to produce models on an enormous scale, and to erect them life-size on an experimental piece of ground, instead of in the draughtsman's room in a proportion of 1 to 100. But, as always, things turned out quite differently in practice, and now they are content with drawings and the production of models of normal size. From the artistic point of view they are aiming at a synthesis between architecture, sculpture, and painting, but all this has hardly got beyond the experimental stage Nor is this to be wondered at, for the motto of this group of architects is: " The future belongs to those who have marvellously little talent for the fine arts." With this slogan they proceeded to reform building in Russia; instead of the earlier temples, castles, villas, and private houses, buildings for the people, co-operative homes, common dwellings, and monumental schools were to be planned. With regard to the housing of the working masses themselves, individual dwellings were not only to conform to all the requirements of hygiene, but also to make possible the common exercise of most social functions, in accordance with collective principles They intended to erect monumental buildings with great inner courts, gardens, playgrounds, halls for meetings, reading-rooms, and kindergartens, and thus create worthy homes for the victorious proletariat.



SUPREMATIST PAINTING







BOLSHEVIK "ISMS"

(From the workshops of Lebedev and Lapshin)

The greatness of the hopes which Bolshevik Russia sets on these plans for a modern style of building are best seen in the utterances of Trotski, who, in his book, *Literature and Revolution*, also expatiates on the possibilities of a new art of town planning: "There is no doubt that monumental tasks, like the building of garden cities, dwelling houses, railways, and harbours, will one day interest not only the trained workers who directly take part in the work, but also the entire people The building of rural towns, carried out compasses in hand, will replace the ant-like heaps of streets and quarters which have been built up unnoticed from generation to generation. In future, the problem of civilized housing will be a subject of as passionate discussion as politics is to-day. Propaganda will be conducted on the question, national meetings held, and votes taken. This struggle will raise architecture to a higher plane, because it will for the future be borne on the breath of popular sympathy. Men will be trained to be 'more plastic,' and become accustomed to considering the world as a flexible clay for the modelling of ever more perfect forms of life. The dividing walls between art and industry will fall The great style of the new time will no longer be decorative but formative. . .

"But it is not only between art and production that the dividing walls will fall, but between art and nature too, and that not in Rousseau's sense of art approaching nature, but by the reverse process of nature approaching art. The present position of mountains and rivers, of fields, meadows, steppes, forests, and coasts, is certainly not final. Man has already made numerous and by no means slight alterations in the map of nature. But these will all seem like the attempts of a novice in comparison with what is still to come. As once faith promised to remove mountains, so technology, which takes small account of promises, will actually shift and displace mountains. This has up till now been done for industrial reasons or for traffic purposes, but in future such feats will be carried through on a far greater scale in accordance with a general productive and artistic plan. Man will occupy himself in regrouping mountains and rivers and in correcting nature until it has been reformed in accordance with his image or at least his taste."

6

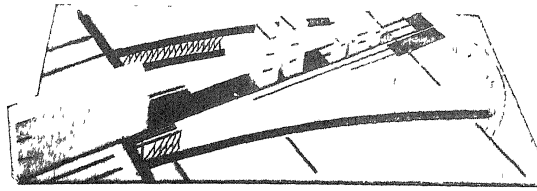
Here we remark with amazement, seeing that Russian art is supposed to be the stylistic fulfilment of practical needs, and its object is reality and the concrete tasks of practical life, that all these programmes, even with sober judges like Trotski, again degenerate into abstruse dreams. The strongly romantic character, which

ultimately is the basis of all Bolshevik attempts, especially those labelled "practical and rational," is here perfectly plain. Whatever this "sober, rationalistic, utilitarian art" may seem, it is always phantastic utopianism, and Wells's dictum on Lenin may with perfect justice be extended to all Bolshevik thinkers, they are all without exception "dreamers of technique." How remote from reality and unrealizable all these "rationalistic" efforts really are is best proved by the fact that they are all still on paper and have never managed to get beyond the stage of manifestos and plans.

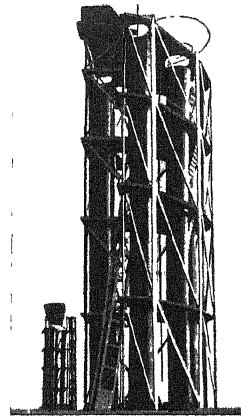
Manifestos and plans, that is all that has come down to posterity of the whole "revolutionary constructive" art, of Tatlin's "movable buildings," of the dynamic monumental style, of the rational rebuilding of towns and the new dwellings for the mass man, and thus of all the noisily proclaimed new proletarian culture. Only from monuments on paper shall we be able to discover what this period thought, attempted, longed, and hoped for.

The real tragedy of all artistic efforts in Soviet Russia lies in their impracticability. This impracticability is due, on the one hand, to economic poverty and lack of the necessary building materials, but, on the other hand, also to the complete absence of all expert knowledge in the artists, architects, and engineers. To draft manifestos needs nothing but a sufficiently lively revolutionary imagination, but even the drafting of concrete plans needs some knowledge, and the carrying out of such building would require technical capacity such as the revolutionary artists do not possess in the smallest degree. Therefore, even the planning of monumental buildings is for the most part limited to rough outlines, without any constructive details, principally because the theoretical training of all these Soviet artists does not even approach the knowledge possessed by any Western European architect. As none of these monuments was ever submitted to a practical test, there soon appeared, within this art "aimed exclusively at the practical," a new romantic aestheticism. The authors of manifestos and drafts more and more lost all touch with reality, and their activity became ever more purely abstract and unreal.

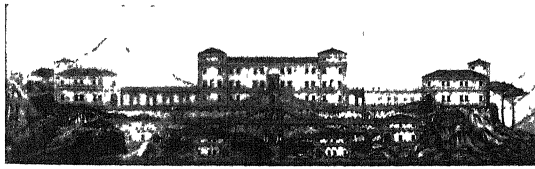
At this point, we must begin to doubt whether a positive new culture and a proletarian style will ever result from these experiments. Naturally, revolutionary artists and the critics attached to them proclaim unswervingly that despite all previous failures, the "superstructure" is actually in process, and that the new dynamic monumental classicism can already be glimpsed here and there. Thus the People's Commissar for Education, A. Lunacharski, looks for a great and lofty proletarian culture. The arguments with which he supports this opinion can scarcely be entirely convincing to us at least: "Has this Bolshevik proletariat really a culture? Certainly,



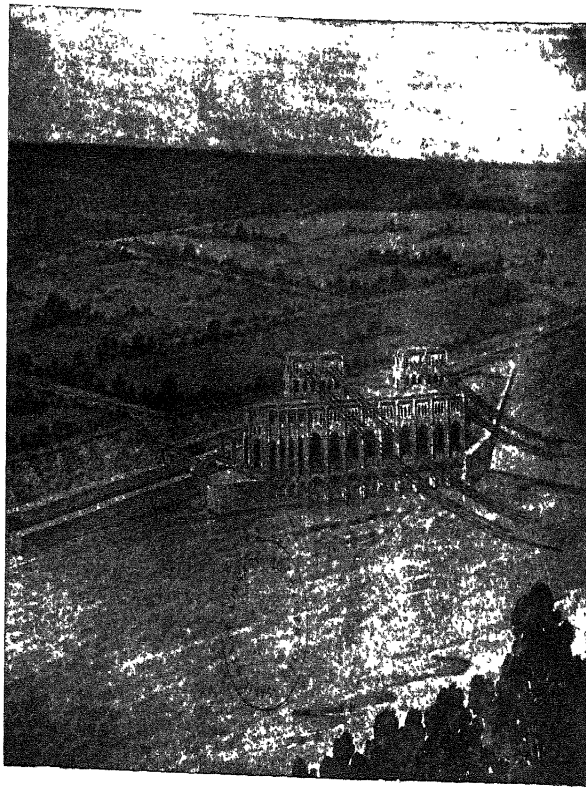
ARCHITECTURAL MODEL
(by Ladovski)



MODEL FOR A CHEMICAL WORKS
(by Ladovski)



PROPOSAL FOR WORKERS' DWELLINGS OF THE FUTURE
(from a "Collective Workshop" of Life Classicism)



PROPOSAL FOR THE "VOLKHOVSTROI" ELECTRIC STATION

This is to be one of the biggest electricity works in Russia

it has In the first place, it possesses in Marxism the all important thing, a subtle and powerful method of investigating social phenomena, the foundation of sociology and political economy, the basis of a uniform philosophy of life In this sense, the proletariat is already master of spiritual values, which can triumphantly stand comparison with the noblest achievements of human reason Further, the proletariat in many countries has shown a strong organizing talent in the political domain However sharp the present crisis may be, however terrible this sickness may be, of which we, undismayed, warned the left social demociats in the incubation period, however near in many minds may be the thought that this sickness may prove fatal, we can even now say with conviction, that it will be overcome, moulded, and utilized, and that the political organization of the proletariat will emerge stronger than ever from this terrible trial. . .

" Art is above all the organization of the emotions in individual persons or groups, classes, and whole nations The art of the proletariat is the expression of the process of organization of its soul-life Who will create the proletarian culture? Who, in especial, will produce its finest forms, remote from the direct struggle? Naturally, the proletariat itself We must in no way be deterred by the lack of time and means and the inadequate preparation, which seemingly is robbing the workers of the possibility of emerging from darkness and raising their heads above the smoke of their oppressive life into the free atmosphere of production.

" Above all, it must be remembered that it is not adequate preparation, time, and means, but vocation, that makes men artists. There is no ground for the assumption that the proportion between capable and incapable men must necessarily be lower among the proletariat than in other classes. The growing public influence of the proletariat is opening up new paths for the most gifted representatives Here, however, we come up against an objection. They tell us that the worker who rises by his talents, and becomes an expert, will be detached from his class and can no longer be regarded as a real proletarian. Fundamentally he will be an intellectual of proletarian origin. But there is no real force in this objection. A great many of the greatest—and also of the minor—writers and artists, who, by origin and education belong to the bourgeoisie, broke completely with the middle class. They contemptuously rejected its higgling, commercial culture, based on the denial of human dignity, and either proudly perished as lonely deserters, or found their way to their natural allies, the proletariat. In their revolutionary flight the lowest classes have always attracted noble renegades from above. In the realm of art, too, the proletariat will find its Marx."

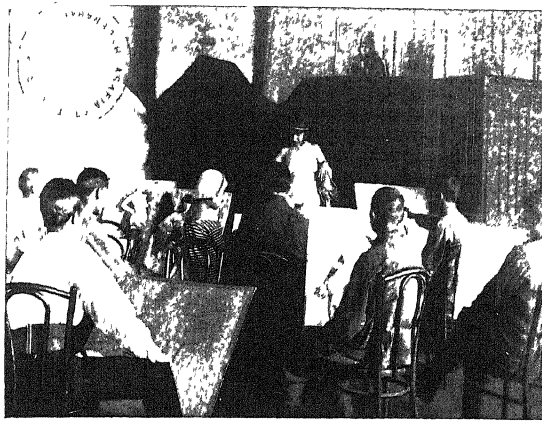
Trotski's opinion is here more sober and, therefore, more reliable, for, although Trotski is sometimes quite as much carried away by enthusiasm and utopian dreams, he is often true to actual reality.

Trotski cannot get rid of a doubt whether the realization of a proletarian culture can be looked for at all He finally arrives at the important conclusion that present-day Russia can hardly show more than the first feeble indications of a new style

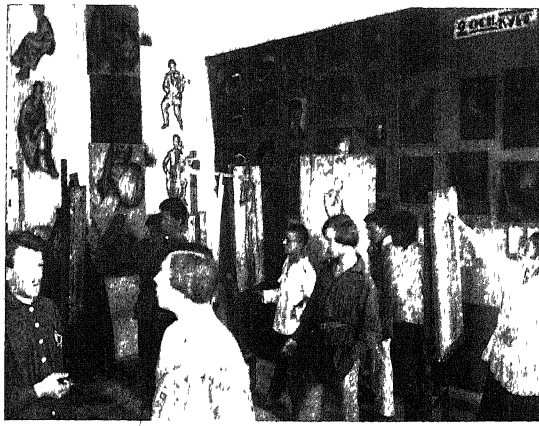
People talk, he says, even now in enthusiastic and even high-flown tones about proletarian art, partly as the art of the future, and partly as the art of the present; but it is clear that a proletarian style can never be produced by means of manifestos alone. It is even more than questionable whether anything like proletarian art exists at all, in any case it must not be extolled in grandiloquent language as a concrete fact Expressions of this kind are highly dangerous, for they force the future of culture into the narrow frame of the present, and thereby falsify perspectives, violate proportions, and distort all standards, purely to please the arrogance of certain artistic circles. The present, too, is very little suited to produce a new culture, for the "dictatorship of the proletariat" does not represent the productive organization of a new society, but merely a part of the struggle to arrive at this. This twenty, thirty, or fifty-year period of proletarian world-revolution will certainly be regarded in the history of mankind as the difficult transition from one social form to another, and not in any way as an independent phase of a new civilization. In the conception of the Bolshevists themselves, the dictatorship of the proletariat is not a final goal, but merely and solely the transition to the epoch of communism in which there will be no classes. Therefore, the age of Bolshevism is not a self-contained historical period.

In the midst of the universal noise of enthusiastic manifestos and decrees, the sober and objective investigations of Trotski have the effect of liberating the mind, when he dryly and critically asks whether a proletarian monumental style is possible at all "Will the proletariat have enough time to create a 'proletarian' culture of its own? We regard our dictatorship, in contrast to the régime of the slave-owners, the feudal lords, and the bourgeoisie, as merely a brief period of transition. In opposition to too optimistic views on the duration of the transition, we should remember that an upheaval of this kind, measured by historical standards, will, indeed, last, not months, but years, and decades; decades, however, not centuries or thousands of years. Can the proletariat produce a new art in this brief space?

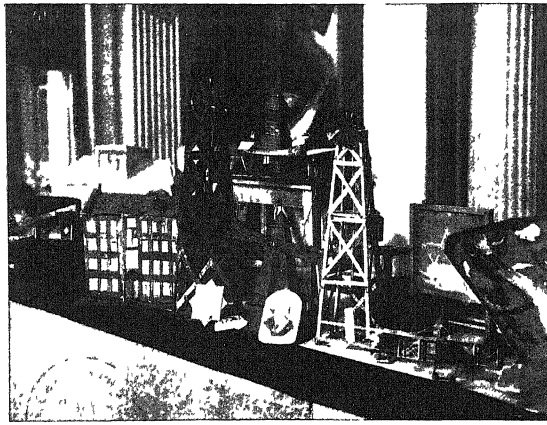
"There is all the more justification for these doubts in that the years of social revolution will be times of bitter civil war, in which



LIFE CLASS IN A COMMUNIST SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN IN MOSCOW



IN THE DRAWING CLASS OF THE "RED" PROVINCIAL SCHOOL IN PERM



ART EXHIBITION OF THE " RED BOY SCOUTS "

ART EXHIBITION OF A BOLSHEVIK SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN

destruction will occupy far greater space than any constructive activity. In any case, the main energies of the proletariat must be devoted to winning, maintaining, strengthening, and using its power, and to relieving the worst need But it is just in this revolutionary period, that sets such narrow bounds to cultural activity, that the proletariat will reach its maximum period of expansion and the purest expression of its class character The more perfectly the new social order is able to guard itself against political and war-like convulsions, the more favourable cultural conditions will be, and the more will the workers free themselves from their class distinctions and cease to be the proletariat. If, therefore, in the period of the dictatorship, it is impossible to speak of a new culture on a large scale, the general efflorescence, which will begin with unparalleled magnificence at the end of this period, will no longer show any peculiar class character. From this, the general conclusion may be drawn that a proletarian culture not only does not exist, but never can exist, a circumstance in no way to be regretted. For in this way the proletariat will acquire the power to make an end once and for all of cultures limited to classes, and to prepare the way for a universal culture embracing all humanity. We are apt to forget this sometimes "

Further, Trotski is of opinion that it is a complete mistake to try to force the culture of the future by laboratory methods, at a time when the greatest poverty and scarcity of the necessities of life prevail. Even the germ of a true art requires more than anything else a surplus and prosperity in all spheres. Therefore, it is entirely premature to try to speculate now on the new culture. Not until " the blastfurnaces glow more brightly, the wheels whir more rapidly, the shuttles dance more nimbly, and the schools work more efficiently " will, in Trotski's opinion, the time be ripe for a real culture and a new style. All the previous results of stylistic endeavours have been, in his opinion, nothing but the " preparation of the preparation," and have hardly any permanent significance. They are nothing but the confused symbols of a confused time, the expression of complete bewilderment, and a will entirely lacking in any adequate practical capacity.

Chapter VI

THE PROPAGANDIST THEATRE

I

THE Revolution, which developed everything in political and social life with the unnatural speed of a forcing-house, had very soon to make many changes in the Russian stage also Just as the forms of society were to be altered with haste and violence, so, too, an attempt was made to bring about a forced transformation of the theatre in equally headlong fashion.

The leaders of the proletarian Revolution, at the very start of their struggle, recognized the suggestive importance of the stage for propaganda purposes, and, therefore, endeavoured from the beginning to bring the great power of the theatre into the service of their cause. The first attempt to utilize this art for political purposes was the so-called " October Theatre," which was nothing more or less than the representation on the stage of the October Revolution. A military order was issued to the theatres, commanding them to take up the fight against all non-political or counter-revolutionary tendencies in bourgeois art. Mayerhold, the founder and commandant of the new militant theatre, decided out of hand to divide " the whole territory of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic into ' theatre districts ' corresponding to and having the same boundaries as the military army areas " He held the power of this theatre army to be very little less than that of the Red Army itself, and, like the latter, it was to be organized on military lines and kept in continual readiness for the mobilization order.

And, in actual fact, in accordance with Mayerhold's plans, a theatre army was formed on the analogy of the military army. The " Theatre-Octobrists " formed, as it were, the storming troops of this " militant theatre " their function was to take the field with merciless energy and destructive fury against the old theatre, quite in the spirit of the " militant communism " of the period. It was they who, in their contempt for all artistic impulses, developments, and nuances, replaced the old repertory by unadorned propagandist plays. The stage was used by them as a forum for political fighting speeches, or for mocking at the bourgeois opponent. Mayerhold

STANISLAVSKI, THE CREATOR OF THE MODERN RUSSIAN THEATRE

TAIROV, THE LEADER OF THE MOSCOW CHAMBER THEATRE

CHEKHOV, A NEPHEW OF THE WRITER, ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS RUSSIAN ACTORS OF THE TIME

GOLOVIN AND MAYERHOLD

VAKHTANGOV

tried to prove that the function of the theatre as a means of political agitation was in no way unnatural or new. Richard Wagner had made a similar attempt in his early days, and the French theatre, at the end of the eighteenth century, was transformed into a pulpit for preaching the new gospel, and ceased to be the home of art. What at that time could not be communicated to the public by means of books, polemical writings, and journals, was put upon the stage, so as to be certain of making the strongest possible impression

The idea of treating art not as an end in itself, but as a weapon for political warfare, naturally underwent many changes in the further course of development of the Bolshevik theatre Later it was found necessary, in graphic art too, to pass from the mere destruction of the old forms to strivings after a new style, just as in economic life the purely negative militant communism was replaced by the constructive work of the " Nep " system Nevertheless, the germ of propaganda can always be discerned even in the loftiest artistic achievements of revolutionary drama For this reason the Russian stage, with its geometrical decorations and its system of biomechanical movements, bears not the slightest resemblance to any traditional theatrical art whatever

The modern Russian theatre can only be judged and understood in the revolutionary atmosphere of the Soviet state. The new resources of the Bolshevik stage, the speech and movement of the actors, the decorations, and the music must seem repulsive and extraordinary to all Western European feeling, if judged without reference to the political and economic surroundings. It is only by keeping in mind the sum of all the differences between the old and the new Russia, that the relationship between the Bolshevik and the earlier theatre can be recognized.

2

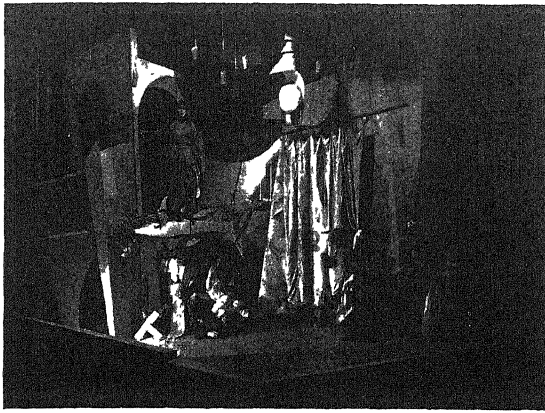
It is true that the earlier experiments of the Russian theatre supplied some of the necessary conditions for the propagandist stage. The reaction against the exaggerated realism of Stanislavski had some time before laid the foundations for that disintegration of the theatre which Mayerhold and Forregger afterwards resolutely carried a further step forward. The use of the theatre for political agitation was merely the logical consequence of a development which from the very start, though then from the purely artistic point of view, aimed at the total destruction of the old theatre

Stanislavski's great achievement was his radical removal of all the remnants of pseudo-classical theatricality and eloquence, and his making truth to life the supreme principle of representation. It was also he who introduced the spirit of organization into the theatre

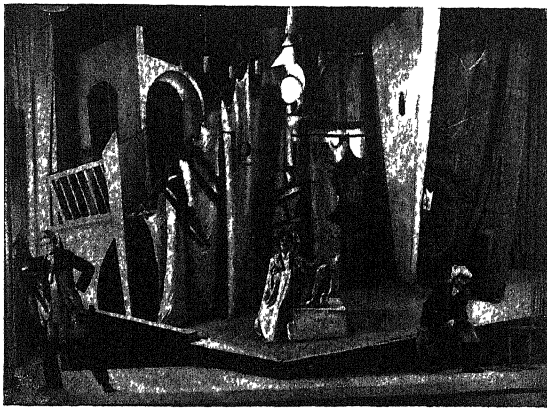
for the first time, and pointed out the great importance of the producer as well as of a uniform stage direction. The aim and end of his endeavours was the most perfect exactness possible in the reproduction of every phase of life; with this end in view he contrived to train his players to be willing "instruments of psychological representation." But he demanded of them the most strenuous spiritual exercises, almost more strict than those imposed by any religious order on its members. Mayerhold relates somewhere how Stanislavski used to pass many hours in the empty auditorium, merely engaged in trying the noise for a thunderstorm or testing the effect produced by the din of clattering hoofs, rustling curtains, falling rain, crackling hailstones, or baying village dogs He superintended with the most painstaking care the installation of the gramophone which was to reproduce the crying of children or the rumbling of the storm, he would apply never-ending tests to the chiming of bells, the crash of splintered doors, the creaking of rusty locks, the jerky tinkling of the bells of troikas in motion, or the ticking of clocks on the wall

It is not surprising that Stanislavski required for the study of a piece a period which makes the time taken for the most careful rehearsals measured by Western European standards seem quite insignificant. A work is polished and studied for years with the utmost self-sacrifice day and night, before he thinks of presenting it to the public. The discipline and religious ardour which Stanislavski's actors devote to their work remind one of magical mystical rites rather than of stage technique. After years of inner concentration, a period of complete absorption in the work, the shade of the figure conjured up slowly begins to appear; first a few of its gestures, and then gradually something more complete, until finally the whole part is realized and materialized for the actor as a new being created by the strict meditation of true artistry.

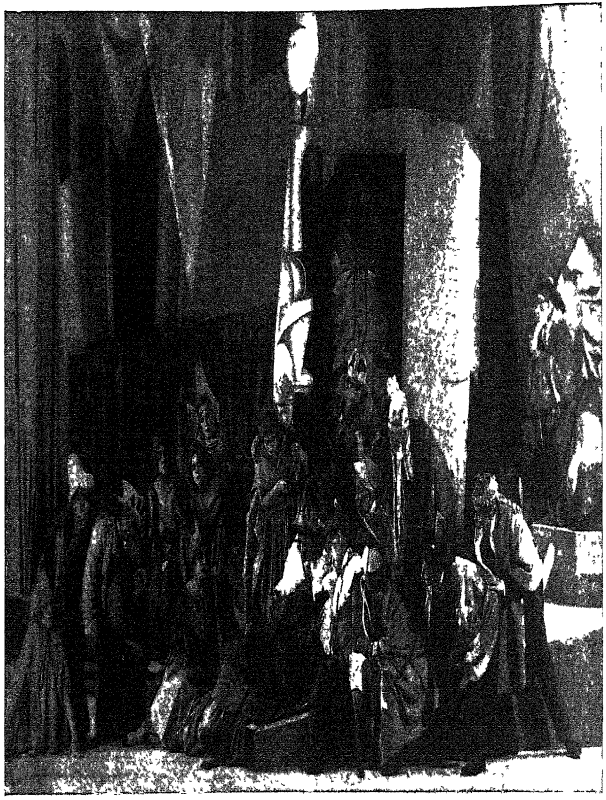
In order to bring his actors into definite soul states, Stanislavski often gave them a psychological training of the most strenuous kind, lasting months or even years. If he wanted to cast an atmosphere of loneliness over the representation of a piece, he would take his actors into remote, solitary districts, and scatter them among abandoned castles or farmhouses and keep them there far from all intercourse with the world, until each of their movements, the cadence of their words, and even their way of thinking expressed loneliness in the plainest possible way. If he wished to reproduce on the stage the state of fear, melancholy, joy, or any other psychical convulsion, he always contrived by similar methods to steep the actors actually in the psychical and mental attitude aimed at. Therein lay the secret of his art; only by these violent means was it possible for him to represent psychical states in the theatre with such deceptive reality



SCENE FROM "PRINCESS TURANDOT," VAKHTANGOV'S PRODUCTION



SCENE FROM "PRINCESS TURANDOT," VAKHTANGOV'S PRODUCTION
(Maquette by I. Nivinski)



SCENE FROM "PRINCESS TURANDOT," VAKHTANGOV'S PRODUCTION

as to produce the effect not of acting but of intimate experience. The cadence of the actors' voices, their movements, and their whole nature were completely identified with the part No amount of trained team-work, however good, could have produced such an unparalleled total effect as Stanislavski produced This effect can only be exercised by men who unite, as in a religious act, in a kind of mystical community of soul, and thus, in some sort, achieve a higher form of human life.

But however splendid the achievements of his theatre may have been, it is not surprising that a strong reaction against this style soon made itself felt. Such psychologizing was felt more and more to be one-sided exaggeration, and efforts were made to escape from his ascendancy Two prominent pupils of Stanislavski, Vakhtangov and Mayerhold, in totally different ways, tried to give new life to the theatre. Although later on various other theatrical revolutionaries grouped themselves round them, the real reform of the stage was entirely the work of these two.

Vakhtangov, in his innovations, kept entirely within the strict limits of the purely artistic and dramatic; no political revolutionary influence is anywhere discernible in his works He confined himself to leading the stage from a realism which had become stereotyped, and from the dictatorial dominance of a purely imitative conception, to a freer art He refused to have anything to do with reproducing life as it is in its most subtle shades, an endeavour which, even in its supreme perfection, can never be anything but a " biological and psychological photography " He tried to create afresh on the stage an artistic life, a fictitious reality, out of the conditions of the spirit. His productions, such as *Eric XIV*, Maeterlinck's *Antonius*, Gozzi's *Princess Turandot*, were all the result of a complete personal experience of those poetic truths which rise above mere truth to nature, and for this reason they are among the most important events of the Russian theatre. *Princess Turandot*, in particular, must be called an entirely successful experiment in bringing the world of the Chinese legend nearer to the spirit of our time in the form of a modernized *Commedia dell'Arte*.

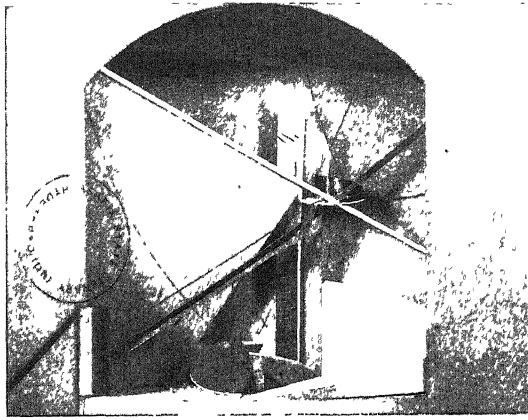
There were no secrets from the audience. The actors came on in their ordinary dress, greeted the public, and proceeded, with the aid of gaily coloured materials which hung on cords over the simple but original stage, to transform themselves into the heroes of the piece in full view of the public. The prince, for example, drew a piece of linen over his frock coat and wound a turban round his head; an old man put on a beard and fringed cloths; the ladies threw scarves over their dresses, and only four of the masks of the original comedy wore their regular theatrical costume all the time; these were the servants who, in the entr'actes, treated the audience

to all kinds of comic business The actors who were not directly employed on the stage wandered about the auditorium, and reproached late arrivals It all looked like improvisation, as if a crowd of guests had happened to be at a social gathering, and as if any one of the audience might at any moment be asked to take part in what was going on on the stage. Thus play melted into reality, and reality into play, and no one could draw the line where reality actually ended and the play began.

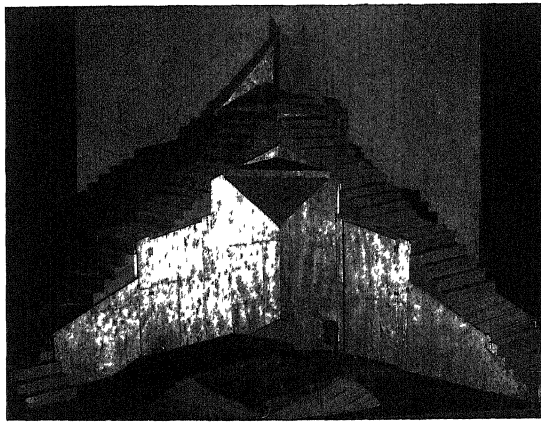
3

One of the most valuable creations of Russian theatrical art associated with the name of Vakhtangov is the " Habima " company, the Moscow Jewish theatre. Most of its members come from Palestine. They are Jews who emigrated to Russia, and appealed to Stanislavski to develop their unused theatrical powers Stanislavski turned them over to his favourite pupil, Vakhtangov, and he, a creative genius, although being a Russian he did not know a word of Hebrew, was able to make out of this handful of untrained young people a company which to-day is truly unique. For seven years the members of the " Habima " company had to undergo the most strict ascetic training in all Vakhtangov's disciplinary methods From this blend of Russian stage tradition and the strict ritual of Palestine Jews, there resulted a quite peculiar artistic life, nourished from two primitive nationalities, and bound together by a twofold, deeply felt austerity Thus even to-day, in the midst of the machine age, there still survives that old tradition of Russian dramatic art which resembles a religious cult of the soul, and the introduction of which is the great achievement of Stanislavski.

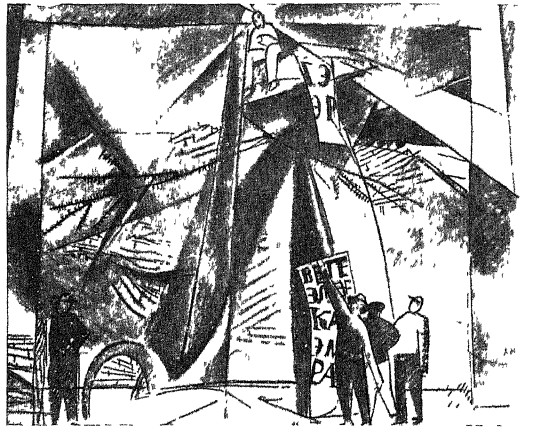
With almost incomprehensible heroism the members of the " Habima " impose the utmost self-denial on themselves in order to serve their art with the purity their feelings demand Not only do the chief actors lead entirely uncompromising and almost ascetic lives, but even those who play quite small parts are convinced that only the extreme exertion of all their spiritual forces and complete purity of heart will make possible the almost religious community of perfect acting The methods of the " Habima " are thus fundamentally different from those of a European company. A piece is rehearsed for years with infinite patience, the ultimate expression in word and deed is sought for In this, each of the members is a Flaubert of the stage. The first six months is mostly spent at the desk, the piece is read aloud and discussed day and night. Every member makes his proposals and gives his opinion. These debates, in which the piece is " collectively " worked out, form the foundation on which the individual studies are later built up. But even the



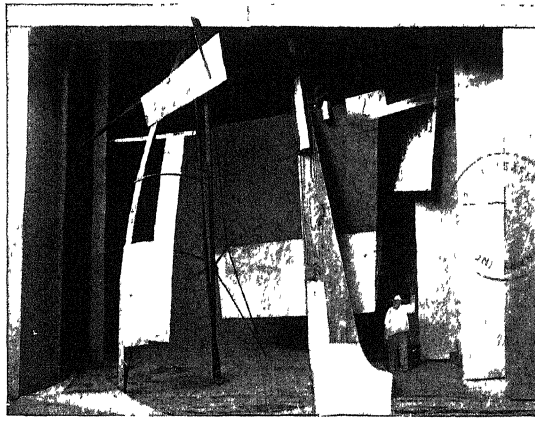
MODEL FOR "ANY" "HEROIC" REVOLUTIONARY PLAY IN MAYERHOLD'S THEATRE



SCENE FROM MAYERHOLD'S THEATRE



TATLIN'S MAQUETTE FOR A " PROPAGANDA STAGE "



TATLIN'S MODEL FOR A " PROPAGANDA STAGE "

individual studies are begun by all the actors in common; another six months is spent almost entirely in discussions of the main parts. Certain members of the company try to represent the characters in all possible situations until ultimately they attain complete reality. The parts are finally assigned to the actors who have succeeded best in realizing them Not until all the characters in the piece have been shaped and allotted by this joint work, does the real stage work begin.

Now the producer assumes sole control, and tries to fit all these elements already carefully worked out into the realization of his technical scheme. From this moment actors, painters, and musicians are all equally subject to the producer, who, to a certain extent, acts as director of the whole. The painter, who has been present at all rehearsals, does not begin his work until he is perfectly acquainted with the whole dynamics of the stage play; the musician, too, must first carefully watch the scenic proceedings before he begins to harmonize his music with the play.

All the costumes and the settings are also carefully discussed by the whole " collectivity "; nothing is considered finished until the acting, the music, the settings, and all the scenic accessories have been brought into the most complete harmony. The study of a piece in the " Habima studio " lasts three years or more; even revivals of works previously played are discussed for four or six months and then rehearsed on the stage for a further six months before they are produced.

In order not to be compelled by financial difficulties to speed up the work of rehearsal at the expense of artistic perfection, the members of the " Habima " usually occupy small posts, which ensure them enough to live on. Vakhtangov's pupils give lessons, work in offices, and are ready to make any sacrifice so as to be able to devote as much time as possible to their art. They usually live in the theatre, as close to the stage as possible, often in the dressing-room, and thus even externally their whole life is closely attached to the theatre. The " Habima " company intensify this attachment by a sort of Jewish austerity; the alliance of the members thus shut off from the world, in many of its aspects recalls the dark narrowness of the Ghetto. All their life and interests are enacted entirely in the closed circle of their colleagues; they marry only amongst each other, and it is as if a wall divided them from the world around them.

The theatre itself is regarded by them as something sacred, and to each of these actors the day he appears is a high religious festival, before which the reality of the external world sinks into complete insignificance. In face of the performances of this company we are sensible of the enormous distance which separates Russian stage life from all Western artistic practices, and understand that such a stage

culture is possible only as the expression of a spiritual culture which is infinitely remote from anything familiar to us

Parallel with Vakhtangov's work, others have also attempted a further development of the Russian stage.

Tairov, with his chamber theatrical performances, also undertook a liberation from the restraints of realism, and created the "conditioned stage," on which all psychology was to be translated into the forms of the purely theatrical, even ultra-theatrical, *Commedia dell'Arte*. Being convinced that the whole theatre is playing in itself and for itself, Tairov proceeded to discover the laws of this pure theatrical playing, quite logically he arrived in this way at the *Commedia dell'Arte*, at Punchinello and Columbine His stage became the "typical theatre" in which the actors appeared with bizarre movements and in fantastic costumes, and where every scene produced an entirely theatrical exuberance The repertory of the Tairov company is fairly varied and eclectic in addition to *Salomé* and the plays of Sophocles, they play things like *Giroflé-Giroflá*, everything is conceived purely from the spectacular point of view, and mounted to suit this All psychical values and all considerations of the content of the pieces are purposely disregarded In this way Tairov created Russian expressionism in the theatre His company, like Vakhtangov's, remained almost untouched by political influences, and therefore may be regarded on the whole as the theatre of Moscow bourgeois society.

4

The real "revolutionary theatre," which seemed singled out from the beginning to be an instrument of political propaganda, is exclusively and entirely the work of Mayerhold, also a pupil of Stanislavski. He was the first openly to reject the monotonous realism of the latter, as neither Stanislavski's repertory nor his manner of producing satisfied him. Mayerhold is not, however, content merely with barren negation; he, one of the few in Soviet Russia whose artistic talent and productive power are unquestionable, created a quite new revolutionary style in place of the realistic theatre. Even in its extreme phases and its occasional aberrations Mayerhold's art always produces the impression of an undeniably strong individuality. At first, he adopted a sort of symbolism, then like Tairov, went on to a *Commedia dell'Arte* style, and finally arrived at the "bio-mechanical" stage technique, of which he to-day the chief representative

This whole movement would hardly have reached such surprising developments as may be seen in Mayerhold's theatre to-day, if the Revolution had not turned this theatre into the artistic "headquarte

of communist propaganda," and thus ensured to it the strongest State support Mayerhold and his colleague Dershavin founded in 1921 the " higher State-controlled workshops," and thereby secured to some extent official sanction for his principles. In his programme Mayerhold emphasizes the fact that the psychologically exaggerated method of his former teacher suffers from a lack of equilibrium; the proportion between soul and body in Stanislavski's actors is weighted against the body, therefore the physical is always kept subordinate to the demands of spiritual experience The over-developed soul is generally found in Stanislavski's company in alliance with a degenerate physique, unfit for any gymnastic exercises, which, by its unregulated mechanism and clumsy movements, is a constant hindrance to the players. Mayerhold strove to correct this lack of harmony and to restore a sound relation between psychological experience and its physical means of expression. For so long as the soul floated perpetually on the heights, while the body seemed rooted in the earth, everything that happened on the stage represented a delusory world which had entirely lost touch with reality. Therefore, Mayerhold demanded the most intensive practice of physical culture, so that the actor should be able to incarnate his feelings completely in his actions besides the action on the stage must have a beneficial effect on the health both of the actors and of the spectators. This physical fitness would also produce free spiritual capacities.

Mayerhold's bio-mechanics purports to represent a well thought-out system of stage movements, which aims at the highest physical and social training of the actor. The most important task of the actor is thus the complete control and the right use of all physical movements, therefore the cultivation of his body is his first social duty. The whole world of feeling is, as it were, to be extensified in this way, and the body and the limbs are to be the sole instruments of the actor.

It may be remarked that these ideas have a good deal in common with the prevailing political tendencies, which are also directed exclusively to physical action and dynamic momentum. He further proclaims that he desires to educate the actor to be a socially useful creature, no longer to exercise him merely in " cracking the old nuts of psychological riddles," but to train him to be " an instrument for social manifestos." Thus Mayerhold was able to declare that the theatre had no longer any independent right to existence. The actor in the old sense is socially superfluous, and a theatre which merely stimulates the audience to rummage among " worthless soul-junk," which creates no social experience, is absurd and harmful.

Mayerhold's pupil must always feel himself to be a member of the new society, and it is his duty to occupy himself in social work, and not only " strut about as an actor." Thus the diligent pupil

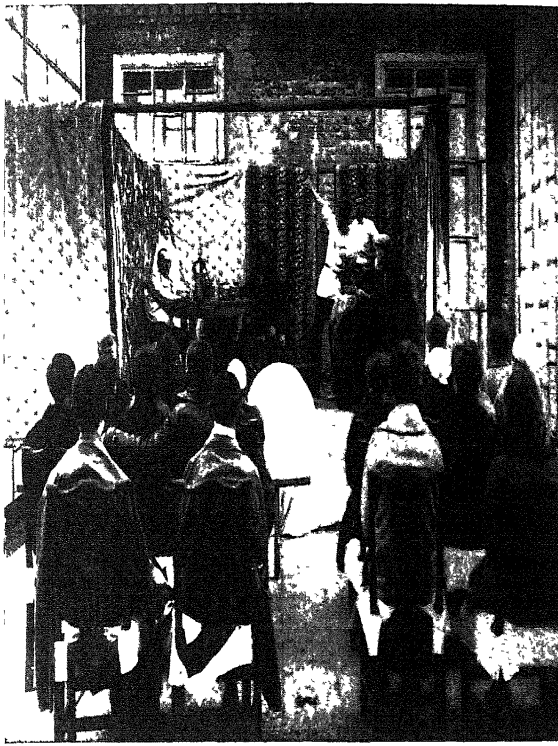
now zealously swots at bio-mechanics, practical life kinematics, and the technology of the living body. He learns to sit correctly, to walk, run, climb, polish shoes, and the art of getting into a train correctly, for, according to his master's doctrine, every movement of the body must be systematically brought to its final formula and into close connection with the collectivity

The stage is, therefore, to organize the mass collectively, just as the press and the poster had done at an earlier period Thus the " principles of this theatre are in entire conformity with those of Marxism, because they try to emphasize the elements which make prominent what is common to all men, the unindividual " Everything which is specifically theatrical, which does not act on daily life in a propagandist fashion, must be banished from the new theatre.

Mayerhold's theatre thus tries exclusively to communicate to the masses in a concise form the revolutionary watchwords and ideologies which correspond to the political tendencies of the moment. In this connection Mayerhold maintains that he does not wish to banish psychology and the emotional entirely from the stage, but he is not concerned with the individual soul, which can give no new perceptions to the masses he puts the mass-soul in place of the individual, for the mass-soul contains the real essence of the whole revolutionary class, the communication of which is the social function of the theatre

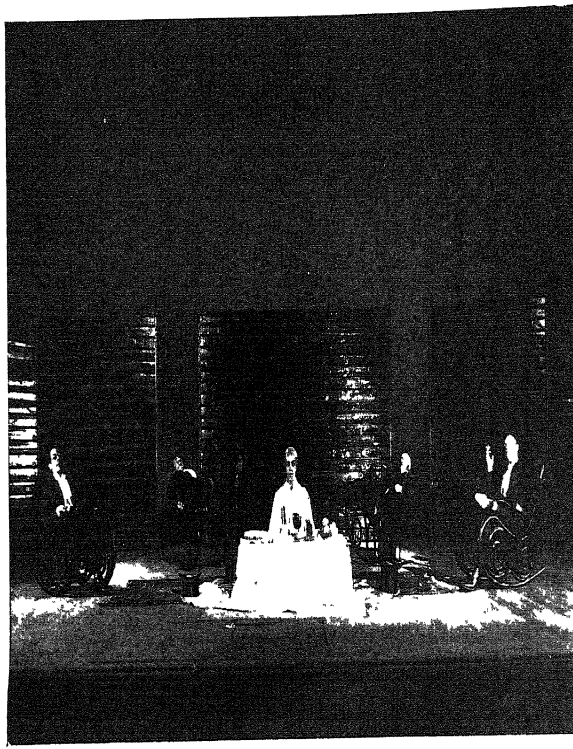
Thus the problem arose of how to reshape the actors who " had been depraved and physically demoralized by the bourgeois theatre," to be the " tools of an effective socialist propaganda " Mayerhold believed he had found one means to this end in the physical and strictly bio-mechanical training of his pupils, and another, in opposition to all scenery " We will leave the decorative to the secessionists and the Vienna and Munich restaurants," he announced in one of his manifestos, making the further demand that the proletarian stage must be spared everything artistic of the historical and museum kind. Mayerhold replaced the earlier scenery by so-called " constructions," as the expression of the present, of technology and action. " The new theatre denies and repudiates everything which is merely ornamental and not directly practical. It does not arise out of life but influences life; therefore its framework should include also the technical creations of the present, machines of all kinds, motors and cannons, all the more because these objects also strengthen the dynamics of the production "

But very soon he was faced by a ponderous obstacle in the way of the realization of all these aims. Both the literary and the stage construction of all previous dramatic work resisted bio-mechanical treatment, which demanded new revolutionary dramatists—but they failed to appear. They might have used pieces resembling cine-



IN A 'RED WORKERS' CLUB"

Performance of a play by Mayerhold, in which the political questions of the day are discussed



SCENE IN THE MAYERHOLD THEATRE

In the background a bare wall with three bays which are pushed backwards and forwards during the whole of the performance, to express the internal rhythm of the action

matograph scenes, which, being brief, sensational, and full of movement, jostle the audience against each other almost physically But the parallel to the technical and social revolution in the realm of drama is still to come Therefore, Mayerhold had finally either to clutch at old classical works, or to look round for other pieces, which should be effective, though artistically valueless, and which were naturally mercilessly maltreated and mauled about in accordance with the needs of the new theatre and the new actor. Nobody thought of respecting in the slightest degree the original intentions or even the copyright of the authors, for the Bolshevik producers and dramatists recognized only one aim, the adaptation of all works to the " revolutionary reality of to-day " without reverence or any other sentimental considerations.

For example, Verhaeren's *Les Aubes* was completely recast by Mayerhold and Debutov, and received a peculiar constructivist character, which would have surprised no one more than the real author of the work. Mayerhold declared, in an article written at that time, that he was taking over from each piece only the scenario, and only in exceptional cases retaining individual dramatic motives. " Did not these authors themselves act in the very same way in their lifetime? " he asks in this article " Did not Sophocles, Shakespeare, Schiller, Tirso de Molina, and Pushkin do the same thing? Every recreation can justify its existence if it answers a need."

Mayerhold's theatre is the State theatre, and the art shown there is thus State art. There is no doubt that this playhouse is to-day one of the chief auxiliary methods of communist recruitment, and is regarded in influential circles in Soviet Russia as an important force. This could be seen clearly at the celebrations on the twenty-fifth anniversary of Mayerhold's theatrical activity. Then a whole battalion of the most varied military units appeared on the stage to bring the great producer in military fashion the greetings and homage of the Red Army. The Soviet Government, on this occasion, gave him the honorary title of " People's Artist " (*Narodni Artist*), the highest official honour which the " Red Kremlin " can grant to an actor, and Trotski who, from the start, has shown great understanding of all revolutionary schools of art, congratulated Mayerhold on his jubilee in the name of the Government in an official letter.

5

For long Moscow had had, in addition to the official theatres, a great number of amateur companies, mostly started by workers' or soldiers' clubs. Mayerhold's slogan that the revolutionary propagandist play was the only true proletarian dramatic art had a very strong influence on the activities of these amateur associations This

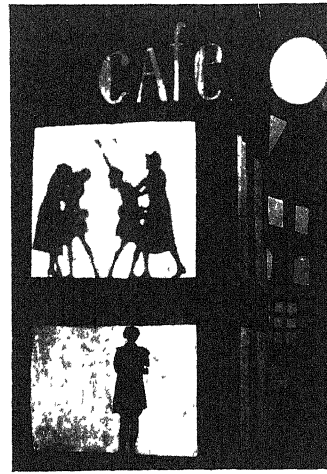
was clearly shown when the great festive performances were held in memory of the Revolution of 1917 Special pieces were composed for the occasion, and the greatest success was achieved by Vetrov's farce *Be Ready*, which made considerable application of Mayerhold's principles of propagandist effects The basic idea of this work played in more than five and twenty clubs, which to us seems not exactly farcical, is expressed in the words. " Let youth be ready, for capitalism is not yet overthrown in the West! " The nature of the various other gala performances may be divined without much difficulty from the titles, such as *October Gates*, *The October Upheaval*, *The Road to Victory*, *Japanese Earthquake and Russian Grain*; the last-named work purported to be a political satire Of a similar character was the drama, *How it might have been*, which was performed in the factory called *The Red Treasure* It described the dream of an old worker, and represented the picture of the social order which would have arisen, if the communists had not grasped the helm of the State

Other clubs put on political cabaret performances or played Bolshevik detective sketches, while in the Arsenal of the Kremlin, and the garrison club of a Moscow suburb, " political court scenes " were given All these performances were characterized by an abundance of mass events, and we get the impression that these are works which could only with difficulty be compressed into the four walls of a room Owing to the influence of the Mayerhold theatre, almost all these pieces were mounted, not with painted scenery, but with " constructions." In the play, *Through Red and White Spectacles*, performed by the Academy for Social Training, the whole of the scenery was entirely geometrical, and limited to the combination of three colours, red, white, and black; associations of young communists gave a whole series of drilling exercises as part of the play. The action in the detective drama, *Ku-Klux-Klan*, again, took place simultaneously on the stage and on a platform on the opposite side of the hall, it was more or less gaily " animated " by searchlights, steam sirens, peals of bells, and air acrobatics. The club of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs tried to go one better, by playing the same piece on two platforms, one of which had to serve for the representation of an attack by the Kerenski women's battalion.

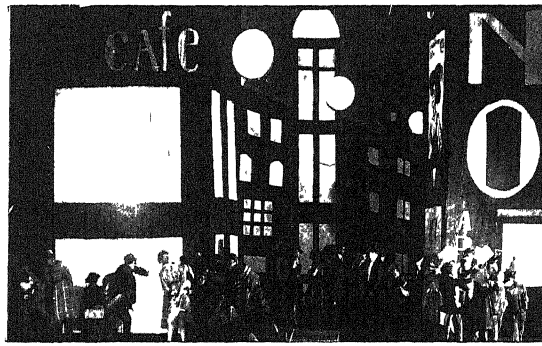
However extraordinary all these " artistic exercises " may seem, there is no question of their success: even the so-called classical Moscow companies, which up to then had worked exclusively on traditional lines, could not hold out any longer against the revolutionary principles of Mayerhold and his following They were at once compelled to include " constructions," and " bio-mechanics " among their properties, and ultimately even introduced these aids to production into the ballet and the opera. The first experiments

«СТАРЫЙ АКТЕР» — В ПАРОДИИ.

AN ACTOR
(Caricature)



SCENE FROM A LENINGRAD THEATRE
("The Unlucky Eugene")



SCENE FROM THE PLAY "THE UNLUCKY EUGENE"

of this kind in the State Opera House were made with new settings of *Carmen* and *Lohengrin*, and these two performances revolutionized the whole tradition of the Moscow Great Theatre Henceforward music was regarded merely as the foundation on which the " total effects " were to be built up They did not confine themselves to adapting as far as possible the stage picture with its colours to the music, but illumined even the purely musical parts, the overtures, and the entr'actes with spotlight effects. If the character of the piece demanded it they did not hesitate to put out all the lights suddenly on the open stage, without any regard to whether this sudden plunge into darkness was in any way in harmony with the course of the stage action. On other occasions they left only the front part of the stage dark and lit the geometrical background brilliantly, so that all the effects of depth were intensified in an extraordinary way

Even the Academic ballet of the Great State Theatre has recently had to give up much of its classical tradition, and is also treading in the footsteps of the new art, which claims the monopoly of all means of grace The performances of Rimski-Korsakov's *Capriccio Espagnol* were done in this style, and even more so the new setting of Stravinski's *Petrushka*.

Even the Moscow Art Theatre soon found itself compelled to open its doors to the new experiments Thus during a representation of the *Lysistrata* the scenery was unchanged for the whole course of the piece, which made it possible for the actors to utilize to the full all parts of the wooden constructions designed by Rabinovich, a master of this *genre*. This performance caused much talk and general dissatisfaction, because the public of the Art Theatre did not wish to have anything to do with such revolutionary innovations But it appears that here too the opposition to the modern school is likely to be of short duration.

6

But whatever the other more or less advanced Moscow companies may achieve, none of it even approaches in audacity the performances given by Mayerhold in his own theatre. Anyone who goes there must forget everything, all earlier performances and notions about the stage, the art of acting, tragic or comic heroes, and banish all recollections of cabarets, variety shows, and buffoonery of every kind. For what is to be seen there is entirely different, it is a new stage for a new public.

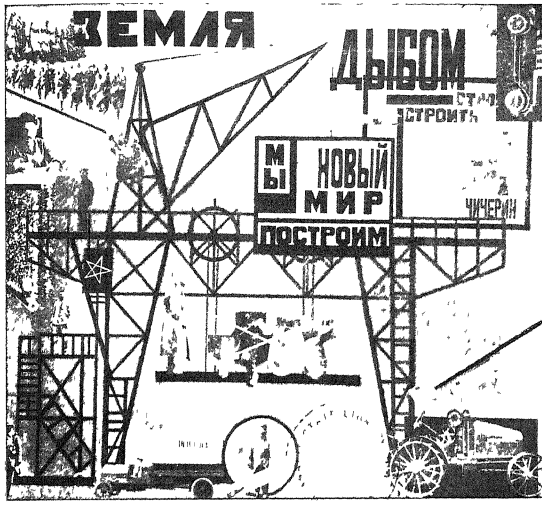
As soon as you enter the foyer an unusual picture presents itself. The audience, who await the beginning of the performance, are not walking about deeply absorbed in talk, or strolling comfortably about

in elegant evening toilettes, quite ungrouped and unorganized. No! This foyer has nothing to do with the old theatre. You enter and must at once come to a halt, for the waiting public, in stiff ranks four or six deep, are marching up and down in strict military step, stamping on the ground. Not a single one falls out of the ranks, not one goes against the stream. Woe to anyone who does not keep step! The unorganized foreigner will make a great mistake if he thinks that he can go on living his idyllic individual life here, and be able to see the performance in spite of it He immediately feels compelled to join the marching column and to stamp up and down with it, until the signal for the start is sounded Then the whole company of the public marches stiffly, as if at the word of command, into the empty auditorium, and in a twinkling take their places without any pushing or shoving.

It must not be imagined that this organized public knows no class distinctions. Next to the fat "Nep-lady," under whose kerchief a careful observer may catch a glimpse of the glittering of diamonds, sits a boy of twelve, barefooted, shirtless, the upper part of his body covered merely with a torn little jacket, with two shining little eyes gazing excitedly at the stage from a hopelessly dirty face In the next row in front may be seen a representative of the Russian intelligentsia with the regulation eyeglass, and near him some soldiers of the Red Army in uniform. Yonder again an old peasant and his wife, both muffled in heavy sheepskins, wait for what is to happen. The man pulls his fantastically shaped cap right down over his face, the wife opens her eyes wide, and her mouth betrays boundless amazement, although the performance has not yet begun You may see Chinese too, and men from Turkestan, Kirghis, and Cherkessen, sometimes you hear Finnish or Lettish. The boxes are filled with girls' schools and communist propaganda schools. Elegantly dressed gentlemen modestly occupy the back seats.

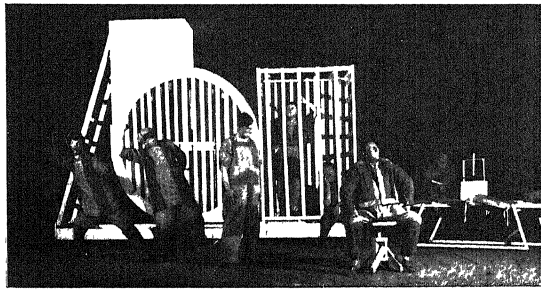
The stage is not divided from the auditorium and you can see everything right from the beginning At first there is not much to see, three or four ladders leaning against the back wall, yard-high "constructions" of wood or iron, a few cannons, a field-kitchen, and two or three aeroplanes, all this war-like equipment is clearly real, and has probably been lent by the military authorities This exhausts the stage properties, for the three sides of the stage are bare featureless walls, there are no wings, no decorations, no movable scenery, nothing at all.

A military signal announces the start of the performance. At once some motor-cars rush diagonally through the auditorium and over a connecting bridge on to the stage They are followed by a company of cyclists in uniform. With this somewhat sensational opening the piece begins. It is called *The Earth Uprears*, and is to



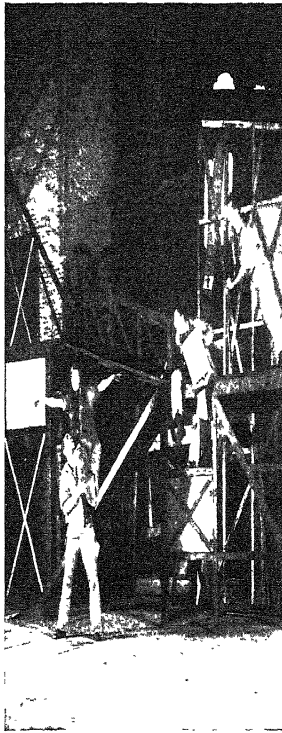
STAGE SCENE FROM THE MAYERHOLD THEATRE

The symbols and pictures of the authorities of yesterday are hung upside down and crossed through



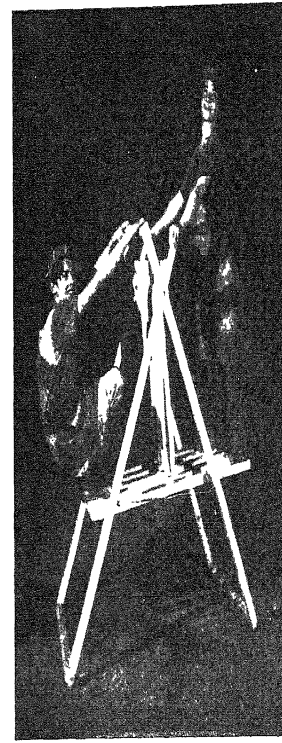
THE "CONSTRUCTIVIST" STAGE IN THE MAYERHOLD THEATRE

Scene from The Death of Tarelkin "Rational" wooden "constructions" in place of the old scenery



SCENE FROM "THE CUCKOLD," IN THE MEYERHOLD THEATRE

The scenery is replaced by technical wooden "constructions." Windows and doors are



SCENE FROM THE MEYERHOLD THEATRE
A "constructivist seat"

reproduce the rise of the Revolution " in its full dynamics." Soon the last phase of the world war is unrolled on the stage. a Russian general comes on, represented as a human butcher dripping with blood, you see the poor soldiers, harmless peasants, and proletarians hounded to death It is not long before a German general staff is captured, it consists of a horde of fierce bloodhounds and absurd caricatures.

Soon shooting begins, cannons and machine-guns are brought up and aeroplanes come into action. Over the bridge, which leads from the stage to the auditorium, motors and cycles rush continually; the field-kitchen steams, wounded are carried past. The fury of war rages unfettered on the stage, through the auditorium, through the foyer right out to the street.

All at once something special happens among the soldiers round the field-kitchen, the dressing-station, the motors, and the flying-machines the fighting ranks thin, the guns are silent, and only the motors still rush hither and thither, if possible more excitedly and mysteriously than before. Suddenly, the " constructions " are transformed into platforms from which soldiers and peasants make speeches The cannons and other war material are piled up to form barricades, the Revolution is proclaimed in flaming words, and Kerenski appears and is mocked as a phrase-maker and a seducer of the people The first communist " party cells " are formed among the soldiers and workers, a new civil war blazes up, the fight for the ultimate mastery Cannons and machine-guns appear again, aeroplanes and dressing-stations take their places, again the motors and bicycles rush furiously through the auditorium. Finally, the first red flag is hoisted and is soon followed by countless others. The " constructions," the platforms, the auditorium, and the foyer are captured by red troops The communist revolution is triumphant. Fiery speeches are delivered, the public strikes up the " International." The " Nep-lady," the lad with the cigarettes, the soldier, the man of the intelligentsia, the Chinaman, the man from Kirghis, all rise in military fashion and join in the singing The Revolution has triumphed and the piece has reached a satisfactory close. The public marches out singing, cannons, aeroplanes, and field-kitchens again lie quietly in their places waiting for the next performance.

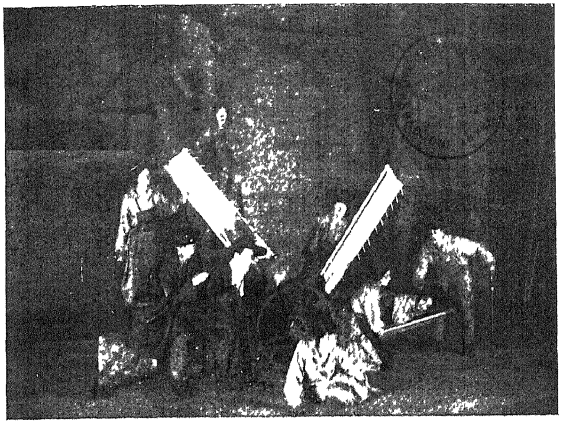
Revolutionary plays of this kind have the chief place in Mayerhold's repertoire No one would ever guess that this drama, *The Earth Uprears*, was originally Martinet's *The Night*, suitably rehashed by the " left poet," Tret'iakov, in co-operation with Mayerhold. But the use of constructive and bio-mechanical " preparation " is not confined to such revolutionary plays; it is unscrupulously extended to recastings of classical pieces. You may find in the repertoire of the Mayerhold theatre a number of familiar pieces,

especially by Russian authors, but from the descriptions of earlier performances you can imagine how the works have been turned topsy-turvy in the effort to make them practicable for a "bio-mechanical constructivist" interpretation. The well-known play, *The Death of Tarelkin*, originally a quite serious work, is performed as a grotesque, in which the principle of the classical play is parodied and ridiculed.

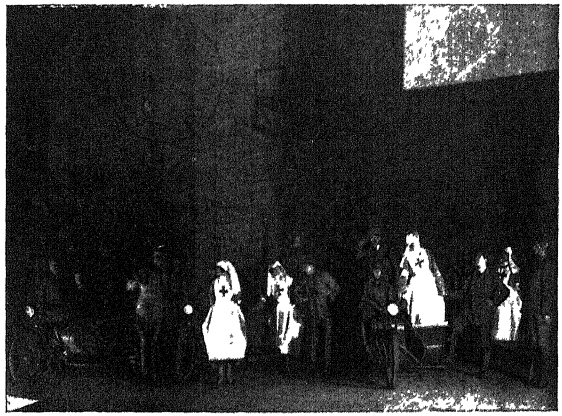
In this case, too, the stage consists merely of three bare walls, and the chief objects to be seen are "constructions." But, in addition, a few bourgeois tables, chairs, and other household furniture are to be seen, the presence of which is essential to the understanding of the action But, in spite of this, you must not think of these forms as you are accustomed to see them—that would be slavish imitation of the lying bourgeois mode of expression for objects of household use It is only the idea of design in each object that is to be indicated, thus the "window construction" merely emphasizes the possibility of the open air, that is, the "dynamically conditioned core of the object." Only the elements of a chair are retained from which proceeds the possibility of sitting on it, everything else is mere dead ballast from the world of bourgeois performances, and is, for that reason, either rejected or grotesquely caricatured

The back-rest of a chair shows utterly fantastic forms if anyone leans against it in the course of the action, with the help of a very peculiar mechanism it indulges in absurd rocking and see-sawing movements If a jug or a glass is needed, not for a moment is the spectator deluded with real objectivity, for he is intended from beginning to end to be conscious of the fact that he is at a play. Therefore everything, even the most trifling articles, such as toys, are distorted, misdrawn, and caricatured. From the wings to the subsidiary stage accessories everything is ruthlessly banished which might have an imaginative effect The play and the performance are reduced to the "dynamic function." From the idea which is supposed to be bound up with this watchword Mayerhold hopes for a quicker tempo, which he considers necessary to-day. The theatre of the present day is for him the art of a time which will have no patience with dreams, with flights into the realms of fancy, or with anything imaginative It demands only incitement to action, and thus the dynamic influencing of the spectator. If you object that this banishing of objectivity includes jugs, tables, and chairs, but not motors, cannons, and aeroplanes, you receive the explanation that the last are taken from present-day revolutionary Russia, and that their presence on the stage creates a pure and healthy atmosphere of reality and of the present.

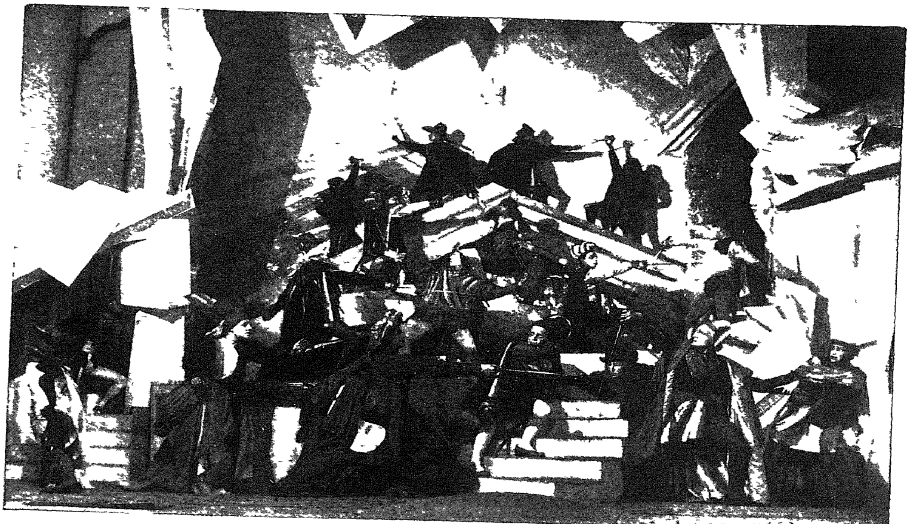
Nor does the great reform leave the costumes alone The actor in the Mayerhold theatre wears the so-called "working garment,"



A SCENE FROM THE REVOLUTIONARY PLAY, "THE EARTH BEARS FRUIT," AT THE MAYERHOLD THEATRE



REAL GUNS AND MOTOR CYCLES ON THE STAGE OF THE MAYERHOLD THEATRE



BATTLE SCENE IN THE MAYERHOLD THEATRE

which is particularly appropriate to his occupation, and is as truly proper for the actor as the leather coat for the chauffeur or the safety helmet for the airman. All the players wear the same blue garment, the overall, which is almost identical for men and women The object of this is easily understandable· it extinguishes the individual and aims at a total collectivist effect.

7

It is not surprising that Mayerhold's radical principles came up against many difficulties in practice. Soon elements began to creep into the new theatre which were dangerously near to " bluff," and the " eccentric stage." This was clearly seen in the performance of Claudel's tragedy, *The Tiara of the Century*. This piece was played on " hanging planes " and moving stairways, the actors moved not only horizontally, but also vertically through space; hoisting apparatus and rope-ladders were used to produce startling effects. The tragedy itself evolved over " an acoustic foundation formed by a noise orchestra." This " orchestra," like the symphonic one, was placed before the stage. The producer occupied the conductor's position and simultaneously conducted the sequence of noise and worked signalling apparatus, by the help of which the necessary orders were transmitted to the lighting men. In another piece again, a distortion of Mirabeau's *Epidemic*, besides the " hanging planes," and " three platforms arranged in steps," rotating and wholly mysterious cylinders were used, whose function was to give the spectator the illusion of " having overcome three-dimensional space," whereas in reality he was seeing a circus performance.

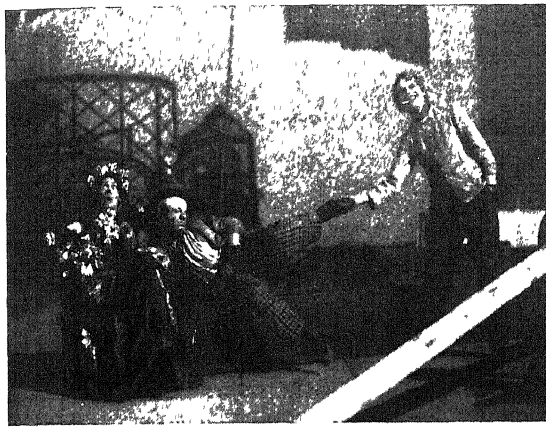
The performance of *Lac Lule* enjoys a particularly high reputation among Mayerhold's following. It is called a revolution in up-to-date dramatic art. The content of the piece is not very different from that of the usual Bolshevik revolutionary drama. Anton Prim, the hero of the piece, is a clever adventurer, who is resolved at any price to subdue his fellow men to his will. This endeavour to make his personality felt leads him to separate from the revolutionary groups he had previously worked with, and go over to the ruling class of the big industrialists. He hopes to find an opportunity for rapid rise in this world of lawless competition, and works his way up from bootblack to minister, without seeing that all the time he is more and more a helpless tool in the hands of his masters. Finally, it appears that he has overestimated his powers, and in the end he falls by the hand of a woman revolutionary, who had once loved him, but had come to hate him for his political treachery.

Mayerhold, faithful to his principles, plays this piece too almost without decoration or scenery, by means of a crowd of " construc-

tions," cross girders, and scaffoldings. It need not be said that this scenery has a definite symbolic meaning, it is not easy, however, for a Western European to grasp the meaning of the symbol, for the allegory is primitive, and always simpler than he would be inclined to imagine. For example, the scaffoldings mean that Russia is in process of erecting afresh the structure of its new state and its new social order. On the other hand, if another piece is played amid mechanical elements of the most various kinds, this signifies that the life of the modern proletariat also passes among constructions and machines. When great wheels are seen on the stage which turn on their axes now more rapidly, now more slowly, you have only to regard it as a kind of speedometer for the passions if the hero is raging with jealousy, then his wheel turns with dizzying rapidity; if calmness of mind prevails, then, in correspondence, the wheels revolve more slowly

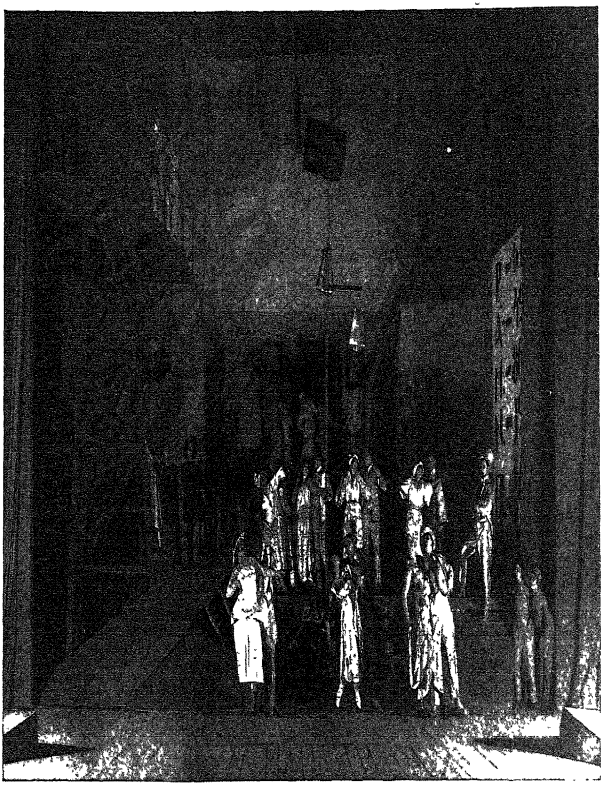
But the meaning of constructions of this kind is not always so easily grasped, and least of all will you succeed in doing so if you confidingly apply to the author with a request for explanations. Shestakov, for example, one of Mayerhold's producers, explains the motives which guided him in his treatment of the play, *The Mass Man*, by the following nebulous statement. The material shaping of the work is functionally dependent on the scenic structure, but not on the ordinary scenery, the geography of the action, that is, the place in which it is enacted. A variation of the theme takes place rather, ranging from purely naturalistic imitation to the disintegration of the stage into planes and the stylizing of optical symphonics. With regard to the action, it represents the battle of the two chief powers, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, and also of a third subsidiary power, the intelligentsia The static position of the piece is expressed by means of two contiguous stage planes cutting each other, a rectangle and a parallelogram, while dynamics is symbolized in the fact that one side of the rectangle is raised, and the parallelogram heaved above it. The incline of the rectangle makes it possible to reproduce the impression of a conglomerate mass, by means of a group of people on it, the raised parallelogram opposite, however, allows for the appropriate dividing and grouping of the mass.

Finally the acute angles are intended to give special stress to the decisive episodes in the piece Dynamic differences are emphasized by means of a rising and moving plane (*trottoir roulant*), and further a wire rope which is stretched diagonally across the stage serves to fix up a swaying platform The lighting, too, heightens the symbolic impression, for it is so arranged that it can be turned in all directions and always brings into prominence the important parts of the constructions, and thus makes known which of the symbols on the stage is at any moment connected with the action.



SCENE FROM OSTROVSKI'S COMEDY, "THE FOREST," AT THE MAYERHOLD THEATRE

SCENE FROM "THE MANDATE," AT THE MAYERHOLD THEATRE



DANCE FROM THE REVOLUTIONARY PLAY, "THE RETURN OF DON JUAN," AT THE MAYERHOLD THEATRE

In the revolutionary recasting of Ostrovski's *Forest*, Mayerhold has laid particular stress on the elements of buffoonery. The dialogue is broken by merry music, dances, and games, and the lyrical scenes are crudely set off by a melodion accompaniment. Good use is made, too, in this play of practical "realism"; during the dialogue linen is ironed or a table laid or a fish scraped and game dressed.

In the fantastic sketch *D E.* (*Along with Europe!*), a stage composition on the ideas of the novels *Trust for Destruction of Europe* by Il'a Ehrenburg, and *Tunnel*, by Bernard Kellermann, Mayerhold, as Bolshevik propagandist, far surpassed all earlier achievements. This performance is intended mainly to serve as "powerful communist propaganda." During the play there are displayed on a film screen appeals of the "Association for Chemical Defence," catchwords of communist propaganda, quotations from Lenin's speeches and writings, and portraits of Soviet leaders. In parallel scenes, a number of crude events from the world of capitalism and "schematized episodes from the life of the Soviet union" are contrasted. The "capitalist scenes" describe such things as the fight of the fascists and the communists in the French parliament, fashionable dances in the Berlin night clubs, a festive evening at the Polish President's, and—the ruin of England, in which one lord gobbles up another. In one of the "communist scenes" Mayerhold's "biomechanical system" is most impressively demonstrated. In the piece *D.E.*, too, Mayerhold employs movable walls and rotating planes which are to "take an active part" in the play, and heighten the "revolutionary effect."

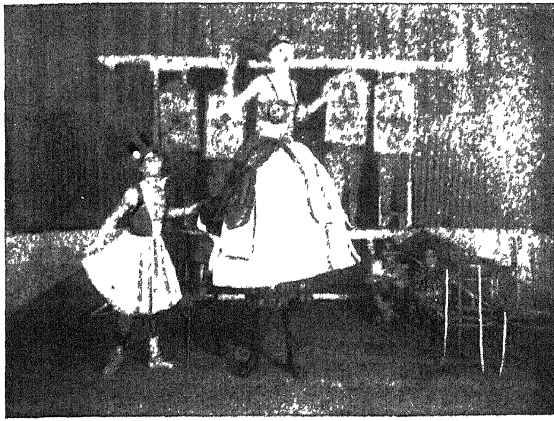
But if we go to the root of all these experiments we arrive at the strange discovery that, in the last resort, we have here a new blossoming of the persecuted, hated, and despised romanticism. Are not all these "constructions," mechanical elements, and scaffoldings fundamentally an expression of a yearning? Do we not discern, in these confused and vague gropings, the unfulfilled dream of the perfected technique of the Western nations, a dream which is found to have the strongest influence on the Russians, who by nature are not fitted for positive achievements in the technical mechanical sciences? What they could not attain in economic and political reality they should at least have the illusion of on the stage in Mayerhold's constructions and machinery. Thus all these geometrical symbols are ultimately merely the expression of a hopeless love, of an unattainable longing, that is, of a new romanticism. But if we have thus succeeded, by this somewhat roundabout interpretation, in finding, in spite of everything, a sympathetic feature in the revolutionary theatre, and in paying to Mayerhold the homage of the recognition which is undoubtedly his due, our never-failing optimism

is immediately dashed again as soon as we turn to Forregger. For the Russian theatrical revolution is by no means confined to the destructive activity of constructivism and bio-mechanics The violent disintegration of the stage was carried farther in Forregger's workshop, in the "Proletcult company," and in the "Projection Theatre" in Moscow What Forregger offers most resembles the feats of circus eccentrics and clowns, or becomes entirely a sort of cabaret, only to drown this too in the flutes of a "noise orchestra."

Since no bounds are set to radicalism there are also people to whom Forregger himself seems behind the times. Such is Eisenstein, the director of the "Proletcult Company" He regards the cabaret and music-hall forms as remnants of the old counter-revolutionary theatre A performance of Ostrovski's *By being hurt you become clever* shows us that Eisenstein goes to work in a much more radical fashion than any of his rivals. Of Ostrovski's classical text scarcely anything has been retained except the name of the hero and that of the author The actors move over the auditorium dancing on wires, an actress is raised to the roof of the theatre by means of a rope, all these are only unimportant features by means of which the producer tries to make the piece more vivid and its basic idea more comprehensible to the public In the course of the action the stage is suddenly darkened, a lantern screen is lowered, and a cinematograph begins

In the most up-to-date "left" playhouse, the "Projection Theatre," there is no stage at all The performance takes place in the middle of the hall, and all the appliances used are exclusively gymnastic apparatus, the "piece" is accordingly nothing but a three hours' display of gymnastics, jumping, and running backwards and forwards, and as it is allied with the most extraordinary physical distortions, it makes an impression of complete insanity

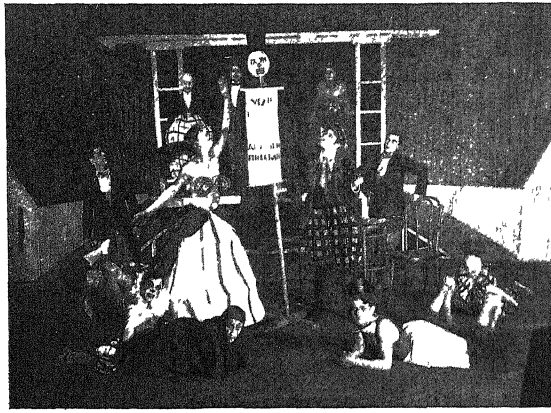
Thus Russian dramatic art has to-day arrived at acrobatic displays, somersaults, horizontal bar and trapeze work, tight-rope dancing, juggling and balancing feats—in a word all the resources of a country fair This, at least according to the decree of the men to whom the theatre for weal or woe is entrusted, is to lead the way to a true and real "socialist" art. There is nothing for the European to do but listen, look, and marvel, and realize with increasing clearness that everything that happens in Russia is in all its manifestations fundamentally different from our traditions and our experience.



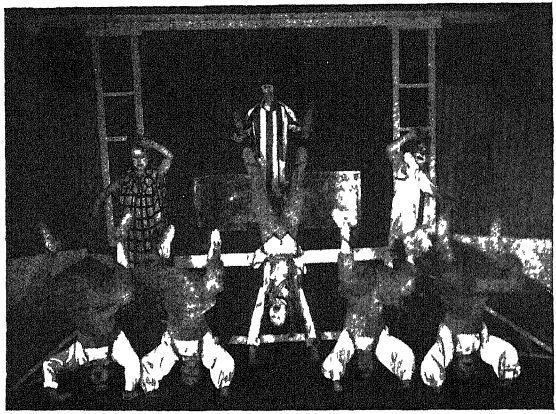
PROLETCULT THEATRE

The "Bolshevik staging" of a classical play by Ostrovski

THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE DRAMA INTO CLOWNING AND ACROBATICS



PROLETCULT THEATRE
Scene from a play of Ostrovski



PROLETCULT THEATRE
Scene from a play of Ostrovski

Chapter VII

THEATRICALIZED LIFE

I

AS soon as the Bolsheviks recognized the great importance of the theatre for purposes of propaganda, they made increasingly strenuous efforts to extend the suggestive force of the stage to the greatest possible number of people. Thus they arrived at the idea of giving performances which should not be confined to the limited capacity of a building, but should be visible to an infinitely greater number of spectators. They tried, by the introduction of great festive mass-performances, to make the streets themselves the arena for dramatic events, and to link up parades, processions, and national festivals, so as to form an ordered and systematically organized total effect. In the slogan "Theatricalize life," the dictators of revolutionary art saw a possibility of evolving with scenic means a propaganda such as could never be attained within the theatre itself. By this means the "collective man" was also to celebrate his glorification in a solemn and magnificent way. It was no wonder that the Bolshevists began to regard the "theatricalization of life" as a task of high political importance. Even in the period of greatest confusion and distress, as much attention was devoted to such representations as to the most ticklish political problems. "Congresses for the Preparation of Theatrical Workers' and Peasants' Festivals" were held, and "National Celebration Commissions and Sub-Commissions" were appointed, which were entrusted with the designing of emblems, flags, posters, and other street decorations. In a special "workshop for the collective elaboration of mass festivals," producers, actors, painters, authors, and stage-hands worked under the direction of the State Theatrical Department in order to fix the character and form of such celebrations.

The content of these representations was mostly connected with revolutionary and present-day Bolshevik events. Thus festivals of this kind were used for the First of May celebrations or the anniversary of the storming and capture of the Winter Palace. Of actual problems of the day, the rationing of food, the electrification of Russia, the requisitioning of houses, the introduction of

motor ploughs in the country, and the alliance between peasants and workers were treated in this way. But not only were the past and present of the proletariat made the subject of spectacular representation; the happier future dreamed of was painted in symbolic pictures; festivals were held in honour of the machine and the mechanized age, and similar festivals were planned in honour of the State of the future for which they longed, and others again to celebrate in advance the anticipated triumph of Bolshevism over the whole earth.

But if the politicians expected from these pageants a revolutionizing of the masses, and a more intensive penetration of their souls with the communist watchwords of the time, the Soviet aesthetes hoped for the birth of a new style, new forms, and new rhythms which must evolve from the living improvised mass plays. Almost all the artists in the whole of the Empire took the liveliest interest in these events, and studied such things as the various shades of red to be used at the May Day festival Hundreds of designs were devoted solely to methods of using the emblems of the Republic, the sickle and the hammer, in the festive arena in the most impressive manner possible, or in wreathing them with garlands of flowers.

A great staff of writers, producers, painters, sculptors, and musicians worked feverishly at grandiose schemes and scenarios for mass performances, for, as it was universally held that this was work of the highest proletarian culture, the State treasury made every conceivable sacrifice to enable the most extensive schemes to be carried out.

The artistic dictators had in mind a sort of imitation of those festivals organized by the Egyptians, the Roman emperors, the princes of the Renaissance, and the leaders of the French Revolution. But, of course, the achievements of the communist proletariat were far to surpass those of the past, and also to show a new content conforming to the spirit of the new age, the ceremonious intensifying of proletarian life, the struggle and the triumph of the revolutionary masses.

The first years of the Revolution, in particular, were marked by mass representations of this kind, which took place on the great historic squares of Moscow and Petersburg, and in which workers, whole regiments of regular troops, armoured cars and warships took part. Their importance as propaganda, according to Bolshevik assertions, was enormously great. But all these efforts were but a small part of the original programme. We can only get a true picture of the intentions of the " artists " if we consider the designs, scenarios, and sketches for these mass festivals, which were later carried out only partially or not at all.

A CROP FROM A PROLETARIAN PROCESSION

Before the Chinese Wall in Moscow

MASS FESTIVAL ON THE URITSKI SQUARE IN FRONT OF THE WINTER PALACE

2

In order to understand the peculiar idea which is at the root of all these ceremonies, we must first familiarize ourselves with the Russian tendency, that is completely alien to the European, to seize on every opportunity of passing from the real to the theatrical, and to improvise a spectacular performance on every possible occasion This trait is specifically Russian, and it is a proof of the extraordinary cleverness of the Bolshevik authorities that they contrived to utilize this peculiarity of the people on the largest scale for their own purposes.

In Russia art has not yet become detached from its original sense; it is still allied in all its phases with those deep and elemental processes in the human soul, through which it receives its ultimate and strongest expression. There is a sort of primitive religious consecration about everything theatrical in Russia, and it would almost seem as if they still felt all artistic creation as a sacred process, and the actor as a social hierophant Russian audiences, too, do not adopt a passive attitude to the theatre, they are almost physically connected with all the dramatic events; they stand, riveted by a play, within the magic circle of the stage action, as if they were gazing at the ceremonies of a deeply affecting religious cult.

The theatre for the Russian is something that touches him very closely; it is for him a necessity of life; for the inner liberation of the soul, the heightening of vitality, come to him only from active sharing in creation. Thus the play is for him a collective act of spiritual liberation, as Church services are to religious people. In this point, his Asiatic devoutness has a creative power. This power is therefore never limited to the stage and the platform; it appears everywhere, in all manifestations of life, on the street, in his own home, on every occasion when events cause an inner tension which can only be expressed by creation.

If a Russian recounts an incident in company, in his political club, or even in the street, he does not for long confine himself to verbal description. Suddenly, he sends a gesture into space, like an arrow from a bow, at the same time giving the cue to another in the circle, who immediately becomes an actor in the drama. Though at first the whole thing looks like a very excited discussion, soon many emphatic gestures and words creep in and an increasing number of the bystanders begin to take part in the scene. Suddenly the recital takes living form: chairs and tables are shifted with a few touches, and soon stand in a particular relation to each other and to the events being enacted. Men and things are now subject to new and different laws. Those taking no part look on in astonishment

and soon become an audience, just as the story, which was at first merely related, becomes reality and attains complete actuality in the people acting and the improvised scenery. Actors, spectators, and objects are lifted above their former everyday ordinariness, and serve to create a play, a comedy, or a tragedy, as the case may be. This lasts as long as the anecdote enacted, then the company at once returns to ordinary life, a moment later the tables and chairs are back in their old places, and the members of the circle sit smoking and talking again in their former quiet tones as if nothing had happened.

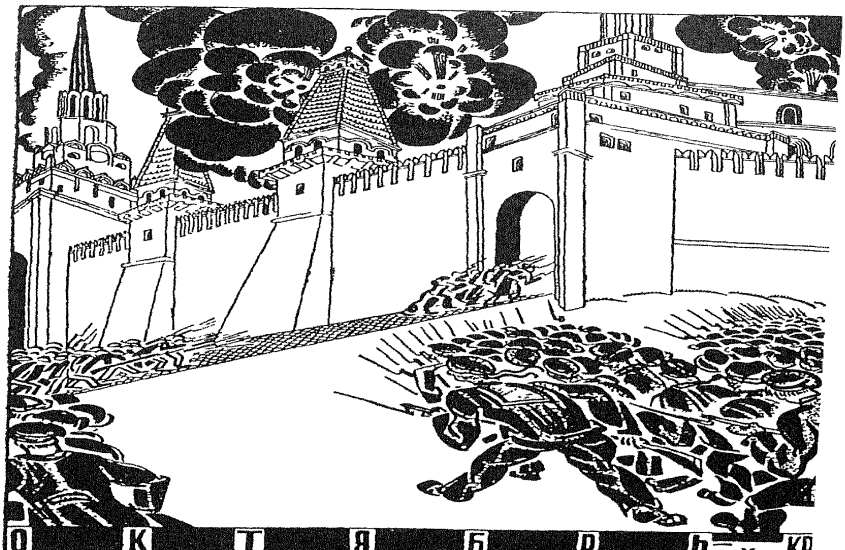
If an improvised play of this kind takes place on the street among a group of chance-met passers-by, then everything which passes, pedestrians, vans, and motor-cars are drawn into the action and must take part in the play No one is surprised after the first minute nor refuses when chance involves him suddenly in an improvised dramatic scene

You have frequent opportunities of observing the same thing in the country too If two peasants start to chaff one another, a play immediately results with impromptu singing. Such happenings among the rural population go by the name of " chafchushski." But whether in the town or the village, it is always as if the everyday were transformed by the spark of a chance word or gesture into drama, into a play whose content is determined by the conversation that precedes it Tempo and rhythm result quite naturally from the situation, the scenery springs up of itself from the surroundings that happen to be there, from the objects more or less at hand.

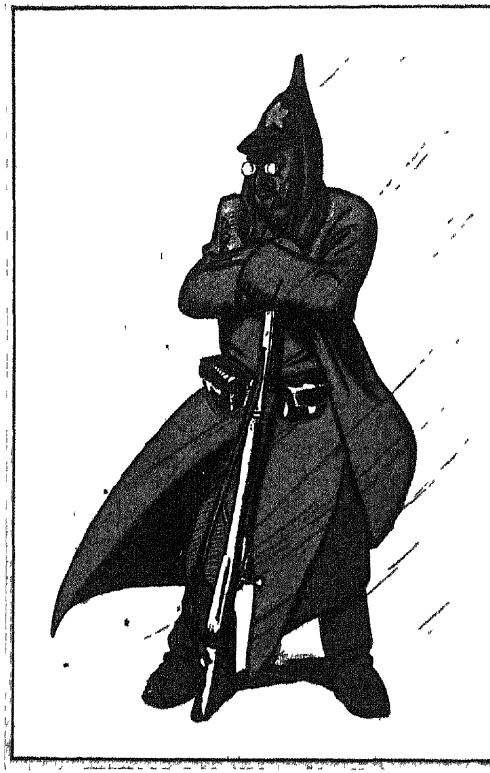
Here we have plainly to do with a primitive artistic instinct in the population. the improvised play is a national characteristic, and the natural co-operation between the actor and the public is a Russian trait. It is true that there is something naive at the bottom of it all. Abstract conceptions make very little appeal to the Russian; he has to act and create in order to make himself completely understood. There were certainly good reasons why the religious play, as systematically developed by the orthodox Church, exercised so great an influence on the masses in Russia, an influence which would never have been accomplished by theoretical, abstract explanations. If the Bolsheviks had not also adopted the methods of scenic representation for the propagation of their new ideas, the spread of communism on a large scale would have been unthinkable.

3

Demonstration forms the framework of all Bolshevik mass festive performances. In Moscow and Leningrad, advantage is taken of the most trifling occasion to arrange a demonstration, and you can no



THE STORMING OF THE KREMLIN
(Drawing by Krinski)



CARICATURE OF TROTSKI
(Drawing by Deni)

RADEK

LENIN ADDRESSES THE CROWD FROM THE FACTORY CHIMNEYS

(Drawing by Deni)

longer conceive the streets of these towns except as filled with strolling masses of men. On such occasions, from all quarters and corners stream workers, soldiers, Soviet officials, whole organizations, unions, and schools, and soon even the most spacious squares are full of people. Motor-cars and all passing carriages are stopped and turned in a second into moving speakers' platforms, from which soldiers, workers, agitators, or students make flaming speeches to the people. Here, too, they immediately proceed to scenic representations, and performances are improvised everywhere with the aid of living pictures. Not only do the public officials specially released from work for the purpose co-operate in such demonstrations, the most important singers and actors of the classical and modern theatres take part. Lectures are held, revolutionary songs are sung, the orchestra plays operatic music, the ballet from the "Great Theatre" is requisitioned. The great poets of the day recite their latest efforts to the populace; from the balconies of the Government offices, from the platforms, and from the roofs of motor-cars the People's Commissars address the masses. A swarm of flags and banners makes gay the houses and the swaying crowd; radio concerts, torchlight processions, and cinematograph performances are held. The speeches are broadcast for immense distances by means of loud speakers, while on the roofs of the tramway-cars moving punch and judy shows are given for the children.

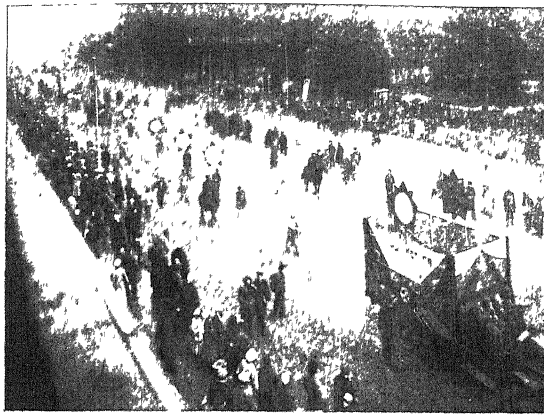
The tone and form of all these pageants are naturally in every way adapted to the political understanding of the masses, and are, therefore, quite naive and clumsy. The mass man, for whose applause all these strenuous efforts are made, consists of many thousands of proletarians and peasants, and all political slogans must be communicated to them in the simplest and most obvious form possible.

Thus the enemy of the moment is always mocked at and fought in a symbolic form on the streets, and the masses themselves are incited to take part in this play. Further, the contrast of past and present in the form of crude pictures is popular; for example, tsarist soldiers first appear in blue uniform with fixed bayonets leading a group of political prisoners through the streets; they are followed by red gendarmes escorting chained white police officers. Or a motley crowd of parsons, generals, and profiteers is brought on and exposed to public mockery, with a thick rope round their necks to contrast with their very elegant dress. In a demonstration against England, a doll was set up in the middle of the square intended by its violent gesticulations to represent an English diplomatist in the act of presenting a note. An enormous workman's fist put an end to this act with a clout on the nose of the foreign statesman. On a similar occasion the Englishman was again represented by an

enormous doll in frock coat and tall hat, which was carried round on the roof of a motor-car. If the speaker was talking about England he addressed the doll directly, then he turned to the crowd with threatening gestures against the doll. The "Englishman" promenaded up and down, distinguished and arrogant, with a monocle fixed carelessly in his eye, until a Bolshevik worker, swinging a hammer, leapt on to the roof of the motor The figure immediately sank on its knees begging for mercy, whereupon the workman turned to the crowd and asked if the "Englishman" should be spared Of course, the mass roared with one voice "Strike him down!" whereupon the workman swung his hammer and brought it whistling down with all its weight on the head of the puppet. One of the crowd lifted the muddied and battered top hat, collected the fragments of the monocle, and, showing them to the crowd, announced triumphantly "This is all that is left of our enemy"

The public is enlightened about the position of labour and industry in the country by remarkable masquerades, in which all the industries try to symbolize the nature of their products allegorically. These "production scenes" usually take place on the roofs of motor-cars, and, in the opinion of their promoters, besides their instructive effect, will train the workers in "artistic understanding" The most curious things are to be seen on such occasions Thus at one of these industrial festivals, a file factory brought on an enormous diagram representing its output for the last few months. On the roof of another motor-car could be seen barrels of all sizes, which were intended to represent statistically the output of a brewery. The workers of the Sorokumov fur factory placed dolls to represent Mussolini, Lloyd George, and other political magnates in a big cage and conveyed them through the streets with the inscription: "The skins of the world's beasts of prey, dressed and prepared by the Sorokumov fur factory." In another big cage was a gigantic spider labelled "Capital." Later the prison was opened, the spider brought forth and burned amid the jubilation of the crowd. The employees of the Association of Chemists carried a huge tablet on which was written in gigantic letters a receipt: "For the sick proletariat of Western Europe: one part general strike, one part united front, and one part Soviet Republic. Ordered by Dr. Vladimir Il'ich Lenin. Dose: *Quantum satis*"

The Russian aeroplane factory, "Aika," fitted up a large aeroplane on a platform erected on the roofs of motor-cars in which the representatives of the various nationalities of Russia sat in their variegated costumes, this was intended to express the readiness of all the Federal States to promote the Russian air fleet. The factory of the "Red Soapmaker" arranged on a motor a fully equipped soap-making plant, with vats, evaporating boilers, and funnels. On



PART OF A GREAT PROCESSION OF INDUSTRY

A WALKING EXHIBITION OF THE BOOK TRADE DURING AN INDUSTRIAL FESTIVAL
The officials accompanying the car appear in fancy carnival costumes

two other motors the fight between Labour and Capital was represented, this, of course, ended in the victory of Labour, whereupon Capital was borne away in a coffin. The publishing house, "The New Village," showed a pretty thatched cottage, another wagon carried a smithy with sparks flying from it; later came a procession of amazons on horseback, followed by one of miners with picks and other tools. On the spinners' wagon could be seen a huge bobbin as big as a factory chimney. Another motor carried a great altar formed of ploughs and sowing machines, another a threshing machine surrounded by ears of corn and field flowers labelled "Machines and Tractors for the Peasants!" In accordance with their tried and effective method of always introducing contrasting examples, almost all the achievements of the present were contrasted with the out-of-date tools of earlier times, for example, the agricultural machinery was followed by a funeral procession in which the old style of plough was solemnly "cremated." Sometimes political satirical pictures were interspersed among the economic and technical representations; thus the Colonial Office showed on a manure cart, besides dung and garbage, a general, a police officer, a capitalist, a vodka distiller, and the devil with horns and tail. So that the children might not be forgotten in these national jollifications there is almost always a crowd of comic turns, clowns and jugglers, who turn somersaults among the vehicles, dressed up as turnips, sunflowers, or cucumbers.

4

The hygienic enlightenment of the people is also carried out in Russia by means of dramatic representations. While in Europe we try to fight syphilis, tuberculosis, and other diseases by means of pamphlets and broadsheets, in Russia theatrical performances are given for this purpose; particular mention should be made of the so-called "trial scenes," whose influence on the masses is considerable.

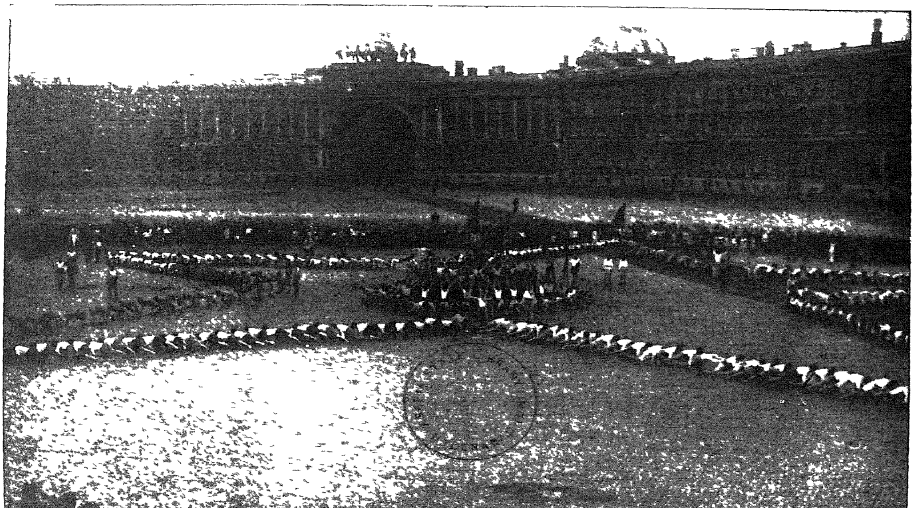
Thus weeks in advance great posters announced the case against the prostitute Zaborovna for infecting the soldier Krest'ianov, a case which is specifically Russian in all its extraordinariness. The names of the parties were symbolic: Zaborovna means "hedge rambler," Krest'ianov is derived from the word "krest'ianin," "peasant." All the usual formalities of a lawsuit were strictly observed: in a great court-room you could see the members of the Bench, the public prosecutors and defenders, witnesses and experts, while the public had to serve as a jury. The case was opened in the name of the Republic, and then the accused and the witnesses were heard, particular regard being paid to the social motives which contributed to the commission of the crime. The Public Prosecutor and the defender

engaged in long-winded expositions and discussions, the experts gave their opinion, the accused spoke her "final word," the court retired to deliberate, and finally pronounced sentence in the name of the Republic

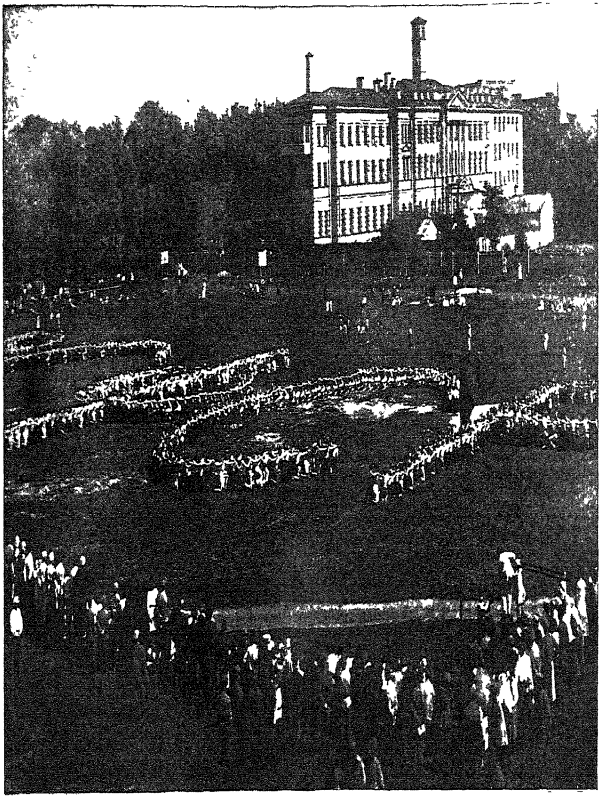
Such symbolical legal proceedings are by no means uncommon, by preference official judges, State solicitors, and advocates are called in to co-operate, while the other parts are taken by famous actors. All this naturally increased the interest of the public in these matters, so that social, cultural, and artistic problems, and especially the political events of the day came to be "discussed in this dramatic way." In Moscow there was "a suit against the murderers of Rosa Luxemburg," "a session on the illiterate," a "case against the superstitious woman," and a "case against Wrangel." The last was carried out with particularly elaborate paraphernalia, since it dealt with a political subject of the highest importance. Ten thousand red soldiers who had fought against Wrangel took part. After the opening of the session, the military assessor read an indictment, in which the general was charged with oppressing and putting to death red workers and peasants, with betraying the country to the French capitalists, and with a secret alliance with Poland Soldiers from the White Army, workmen, and large estate-owners were summoned as witnesses, and only the last, as members of the exploiting class, spoke in favour of Wrangel and gave an account of the benefits he had conferred on the capitalists. An actor, made up as Wrangel, brought forward absurd arguments in his defence and kept getting involved in contradictions, and thus made the case for the prosecution as easy as possible After the final speeches of the prosecutor, the defender, and the accused, sentence was pronounced as follows: "Wrangel must be annihilated! The sentence shall be carried out by all the working population of Russia." After the announcement of the verdict the "prisoner Wrangel" was led away in chains

Discussions of events in theatrical life are also almost always carried on in Russia in the form of trial scenes. If a well-known producer has brought a new production before the public, "legal proceedings" on the new work are instituted immediately. One of the company plays prosecutor, another defender, a producer or an actor acts as judge The unfortunate, who is guilty of the new setting, sits in the dock and has to answer for it All the formalities of an ordinary law trial are carried out in the regular way, and before a most attentive audience, all the arguments for and against are weighed, and finally the "judge" gives his verdict. But it is not only theatrical matters, but also other problems of a literary and artistic nature that are publicly discussed and settled in this way.

The "burial of the massacred books," which took place in



GREAT SOVIET GYMNASTIC DISPLAY
Forming the Soviet Star



BOLSHEVIK GYMNASTIC DISPLAY

Dance forming the initials of the Soviet Union

Leningrad in 1919, must be characterized as the most extraordinary of these dramatic representations. A little while before, the counter-revolutionary troops had forced their way right up to the gates of the city, and in their advance had everywhere confiscated the libraries left behind by the communists, and destroyed the greatest part of the books. When the rebellion was quelled, the Bolshevik authorities were faced with the melancholy remnants of these burnt and torn writings. They had these carefully collected and used them as the occasion for a national festival. All the remains of the destroyed libraries were laid in a great coffin, which was placed for several days on one of the most frequented squares in the city, and then carried solemnly to the grave, with full funeral pomp, accompanied by the authorities, the military, and the trade unions. A "prosecution of the enemies of the books" was also held. The buyers of stolen books, the bibliophiles who exported rare works abroad, and other similar dangers to the book market, were indicted. Here, too, all the accused were represented by actors. In connection with this trial, a petition was forwarded to the authorities asking that the crimes dealt with in this case should be made liable to actual legal penalties.

5

All the improvised theatrical performances have their chief nursery in the barracks of the Red Army. There, too, a work was performed which, in the view of the Russian revolutionaries of the theatre, deserves to be numbered among the "most important creations of collective art." This piece, as is almost always the case with such productions, was meant to glorify the victory of labour over capital. The first act depicted conditions under capitalistic government. workers are engaged in decorating a castle, the owner, meanwhile, on the other hand, does not know what to do for boredom A poet reads his works aloud to entertain him, but in vain. Suddenly news comes that the workers have refused to perform any more forced labour. The owner of the castle first commissions a priest to restore order; when this means fails, he devotes himself to wearing down his slaves by starvation; in this way he succeeds in breaking their resistance The second act takes us into the miserable room of one of the workers, who is absorbed in plans, for he dreams of becoming an architect. Some of his friends visit him; he tells them of his "Tower of the Commune," but finds no real sympathy. Suddenly, the rumour spreads that revolution has broken out in the city; the worker proceeds to join the rebels. The representation of the Revolution next invades the auditorium, and the audience sees how the workers are victorious after strenuous fighting.

The third act brings the realization of the plan on which the hero had brooded in the second act the " Tower of the Commune " is dedicated. The workers thank the builder of the monument, songs are sung in his honour, and he is handed a banner which he unfurls on the top of the tower amid the enthusiastic singing of his comrades.

Another piece of this kind, the play *The Red Year*, was also produced in the Army dramatic workshop. Its action begins with the Revolution of 1905, then depicts that of 1917, the fights at the barricades, and the dethronement of the tsar, and finally ends with the October upheaval, the triumph of Bolshevism In this piece, special stress is laid on the co-operation of the public, who, in the end, are faced with the decisive question· " Who is for the Soviets? " Not until all the audience rise from their seats as one man at this question is the downfall of reaction held to be sealed The public is also called on to take a part in the play, *The Overthrow of the Monarchy*, when it comes to the point of freeing the mutineers from prison.

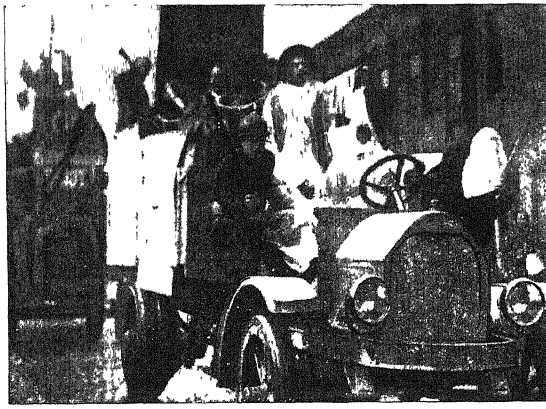
But it was not only the Moscow and Leningrad garrisons which engaged in such performances, the troops at the front and in the halting-places also produced similar pieces On the Eastern Front, the *Batile of the Red Urals* was played, the work of a cobbler from the trenches; in Astrakhan, a composition in the Tatar language, *Sacrifices for Freedom*, was given, and, in the halting-places, a piece called *For Our Soviets*, this last produced the astounding result of making five hundred deserters appear and request to be allowed to return to the Front again. In the year 1920 the attempt was begun to develop on a larger scale these mass festivals, which up to then had either taken the form of demonstrations, or been performed in the somewhat narrow framework of barracks or public buildings of a similar kind, the " theatricalization of life " was to be brought to its highest point As the arena of the events, the favourite choice was the great historic squares, on which the Revolution had been enacted, the squares before the Winter Palace and the Exchange

In the summer of 1920 the first attempt of the kind was made in Leningrad at a May Day celebration, when a piece called *The Liberation of Labour* was played. It was under the direction of the painter Annenkov. In all, in addition to numerous professional actors, two thousand of the military took part. In spite of the great resources used for this mass pageant, only a part of the original plan could be realized; the scenario shows that it was conceived on a much more magnificent scale.

" The scene is a wall," so states the original plan, " in the middle of which is an enormous golden gate. Behind the wall strains of joyful music sound, bright beams of light in all the colours of the

GROUP FROM A MAY DAY DEMONSTRATION

MAY DAY DEMONSTRATION IN MOSCOW



THE FIRST OF MAY IN MOSCOW
Group from a Procession

THE FIRST OF MAY IN MOSCOW
Group of Clowns in the Procession

rainbow dart hither and thither; the wall hides a world full of joyous life Before the closed door stand cannon to prevent entrance into the radiant realm of freedom, equality, and fraternity.

" On the steps in front of the door are slaves engaged in heavy work, driven on by overseers with long knouts On all sides moans and groans may be heard, the clang of rattling chains, and whistling knouts, the curses and shrieks of the slaves and the savage mocking laughter of the overseers. For a little while this terrible noise of human misery is silenced, and the bewitching strains of the distant music become clearer. The slaves stop work, excited by the notes which come through the gate, some slaves express their longing for the unattainable country of happiness by joyful shouts, others by prayer. But the overseers seize their knouts again, the noise of them makes the music inaudible and silences the cries and prayers of joy. Again the sound of fear and misery is heard, again the slaves resume their work in deep dejection while their torturers rejoice

" With shrill noise fanfares announce the coming of the rulers, the oppressors These are surrounded by bodyguards, jesters, priestesses, executioners, female attendants, astrologers, and dancers male and female The procession of the rulers halts in a gay crowd on the steps of the stairway, where the festive banquet is to be held. In front, the Emperor of Byzantium is borne in on a litter, clad in magnificent garments, and with the triple crown of gold on his head; his face expresses boundless arrogance and the consciousness of his " divinity." Behind him steps a fat, well-nourished king in a fantastic costume, supported under the arms by attendants; his long hair flows loose on his shoulders and is adorned by a golden crown. His face with its long moustaches and pointed beard shows traces of sensuality, debauchery, and evil living Chinese slaves carry a palanquin in which a mandarin is enthroned motionless as if made of porcelain He is followed by a planter in a blue coat with gold buttons, tight-fitting yellow trousers, high top-boots, and broad-brimmed hat, with a thick stick in his hand; slaves hold an open parasol over his head. The King of the Exchange wears on all his fingers rings set with jewels, and is dressed in a black frock coat and a top hat. His motionless face betrays greed and cruelty, pieces of gold fall continually from his pockets. Behind him trails a merchant in boots too big for him; he wears a brightly coloured shirt and a cap, his elbows are supported by the shop-boys who swarm about him. A five-litre bottle sticks out of his fur coat. Before him dances a priest with an accordion in his hand.

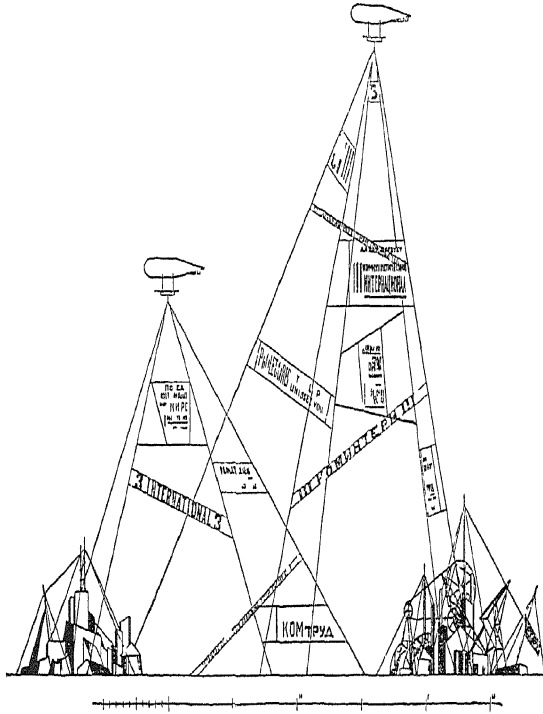
" The whole company of rulers sits down to table. Splendid dishes are brought in Musicians play delightful music, dancers display their art to amuse the guests. None of the partakers in the feast troubles about the splendid kingdom which stretches behind

the high wall, for the rulers are very well off already Their cries, their drunken shouts, drown the sound of the music coming from behind the gate In moments, when there is silence for a little space in the circle of the rulers, the strains from the kingdom of the future sound strongly, as if they wished to call the slaves to it Stimulated by this, they begin to murmur and make threatening gestures. The bacchanalia of the rulers cannot long persist against this unearthly music, soon single soft voices echo, which swell and at last unite in a mighty all-conquering choral song. The feasting guests jump up from their seats, a foreboding of the coming catastrophe fills them with terror. The slaves raise their arms rapturously, as if in prayer, towards the golden gate, which is to open the way into the land of freedom.

" The revolt among the slaves gains ground · they cast away their work and proclaim war against the exploiters There shines, at first but flickeringly, a red flame, which soon becomes a general blaze The masses stream in a disorderly way towards the steps of the stair which leads to the rulers' table, but the bodyguard easily repels this attack A better organized strong column now proceeds to storm it· these are the Roman slaves under the command of Spartacus, who himself waves a red flag After this attack is also shattered, a swarm of peasants armed with scythes tries to storm the road to the golden gate. The rulers succeed with great difficulty in fighting off this attack too, which is led by Stenka Rassin. To the strains of the Marseillaise new hordes march on the stair, waving red flags and wearing Phrygian caps on their heads The soldiers of the bodyguard, seized with panic, take to flight, and the victory of the rebels seems assured, when the cannons in front of the door begin to boom, and again the storming forces are repulsed. The working masses are willing to give up in despair, but at that moment the flaming star of the Red Army rises in the East. The crowd follows its rising with joy, until finally trumpets sound, revolutionary songs resound, the first columns of the red troops appear, and in close ranks push their way through the crowd drunk with victory to the golden gate. Music sounds, one mighty effort, and . . . the gate flies open.

" With a clap of thunder the high wall falls back: the kingdom of peace, freedom, and joyous work has dawned. There is the great tree of freedom wreathed in red ribbons; now the Red Army lays down its arms, and exchanges them for sickles, scythes, hammers, pitchforks, and other tools. All the nations join in a joyous dance, in an apotheosis of fraternity. The International sounds forth in mighty strains, and the whole stage is covered in a rain of fireworks."

NIKOLAI EVREINOV, THE CREATOR OF "THEATRICALISED LIFE"
(Portrait by I. Annenkov)



SKETCH FOR MAYERHOLD'S MASS PAGEANT, "WAR AND VICTORY," ON THE KHODINSKAIA FIELD

6

This detailed scenario, which is here reproduced almost textually, clearly shows the principles on which such mass festive performances are composed. By calling in thousands of men, the achievements of the Revolution are glorified in primitive symbolism but without any trace of the creative according to our ideas. The one original feature is perhaps the mixing up of utterly different periods and civilizations, but even this innovation does not give the impression of being the result of artistic intuition. It is clearly even more difficult than the revolutionaries thought to build up a dramatic structure without heroes, and to replace individual characters by the increasingly vague notion of the "mass man" In the view of the Bolshevik theorists, however, the representation of a whole class instead of the fate of an individual is an important advance, and the reformers regard this as the greatest success of their performances.

On the 19th July of the same year a similar mass festival took place to celebrate the International Under the direction of Andreev, Marzhanov, Petrov, Solovev, and Petrovski, workers' clubs, soldiers, sailors, and dramatic pupils, four thousand men in all, took part in this representation. The action of the piece resembled the above described performance very closely; the arena was the same, the flat space in front of the Exchange Buildings; the lighting was provided by the searchlights of the Fortress of Peter and Paul and the minelayers on the Neva. Again, you saw at the bottom of the stairway the slaves, and at the top, the rulers. Again the slaves tried to force their way up, but this time a start was made with a representation of the French Revolution. The soldiers of the king, adorned with blue ribbons, stood at the head of the stairway, and the fight ended with the overthrow of the communists. Soon dense clouds of smoke arose, which were shot with purple light by the beams of the searchlights, the funeral dance of the women followed immediately. Then the "representatives of the Second International" appeared, bald-headed old gentlemen who carried books of improbable size under their arms. All at once trumpets and posters proclaimed war. Immediately a great red flag was waved from hand to hand, but the servants of the ruling class tore this to pieces and scattered the tatters to the four winds.

The next picture represented the war of 1914. Soldiers marched on, the army service corps and the artillery filed past. The discontent of the people increased visibly; speeches were made to the troops, and finally they came to a halt and joined with the crowd in storming the "height." Motor-cars rattled on, a universal tumult

arose Finally, the imperial eagle on the front of the Exchange Buildings fell, and was replaced by a poster of the Soviet Republic.

Suddenly, the scene of action was extended in a peculiar way, the square in front of the Exchange no longer represented a stage, but the whole of blockaded communist Russia. Life and movement prevailed everywhere, the searchlights in front of the building sent their shafts of light afar, troops poured over the bridge against the enemy, who were supposed to be stationed behind the spectators on the other bank of the river

Immediately through the darkness of night was heard the shrieking of sirens; the cannon thundered from the Fortress of Peter and Paul, and finally the victory of the Red Army was proclaimed Now girls with golden trumpets appeared in the pillar hall of the Exchange Buildings; over the bridge came cavalry, artillery, and infantry, the victorious returning army passed over the square The blockade too was now lifted, ships came up the Neva, the nations of the whole world in their national costumes went on board, and amid a firework display a great dance closed the performance

It is clear that an attempt was made here to pass directly from the illusion of dramatic action to reality· a great part of the town was used as the stage of the events, real troops appeared, and the " representation of the whole world " was so far " real " in that it actually consisted of representatives of the international communist party organizations.

The fight between the red and the counter-revolutionary troops was also represented with extreme realism. Cavalry attacked the rebels, entrenchments were thrown up, artillery and infantry fired with all their might. The public took part in the parade, in the sense that the audience, formed in ranks, joined the procession of the troops

Still more peculiar was the plan for a celebration of the International, which, for obvious technical reasons, was never carried out. In accordance with the design of this pageant the names of all the squares would first have had to be changed and be given the names of the various sciences. There was to be a " Geography Square," an " Astronomy Square," a " Political Economy Square," and other curiosities of the kind The main part of the celebration was to take place outside the city on the " Field of the International," where it was planned to place a radio station and an aeroplane landing-stage Only the prologue of the scheme was actually worked out in detail: the festival was to be opened by the sounding of all the factory sirens in the city, whereupon cavalry patrols, cyclists, and motors were to call the citizens on to the streets. After the First International had been represented on the outlying squares, the development of the Second International would have been symbolized on the squares

in the centre of the town, and finally the rise of the Third International and the triumph of communism, on the " Field of the International."

7

But if this curious plan was never carried out, another not less interesting presentation really did take place, the dramatic repetition of the events of the 25th October 1917, when the revolutionary masses stormed the Winter Palace On the third anniversary of the October Revolution, this remarkable historical festival performance was staged in accordance with the designs of a committee of authors and producers, about eight thousand men took part. An innovation as compared with earlier mass festivals was that the action took place simultaneously on three stages, on two great platforms, and on the actual scene of the historical events, before and in the Winter Palace itself.

At ten o'clock at night a cannon shot thundered rumblingly from the look-out stage, which had been erected on the Alexander Column; an arched bridge was made between the two platforms; eight trumpeters sounded the call for the beginning of the play, and immediately vanished into darkness. A symphonic composition, *Robespierre*, by Litolski, played by a symphony orchestra, opened the proceedings, and the theatrical action began simultaneously. One of the two platforms, which was to be the camp of the " Whites," was suddenly lit up brightly. On a raised stage could be seen the Provisional Government with Kerenski at their head, receiving the ovations of the former courtiers, generals, and great capitalists, while the orchestra discordantly played a distorted form of the Marseillaise. On the " red " platform, the masses were master, at first in darkness, grey, impersonal, and unorganized, but becoming ever more active, more united, and more powerful. In the distance sounded softly the strains of the International, coming ever nearer, until finally hundreds of voices broke out into a cry of " Lenin! " Soon the masses on the " red " tribunal were transformed into the Red Guard; the proletariat rapidly crowded round their leaders, red flags waved. Meanwhile, on the " white " platform, the comedy of unsystematic government was continued.

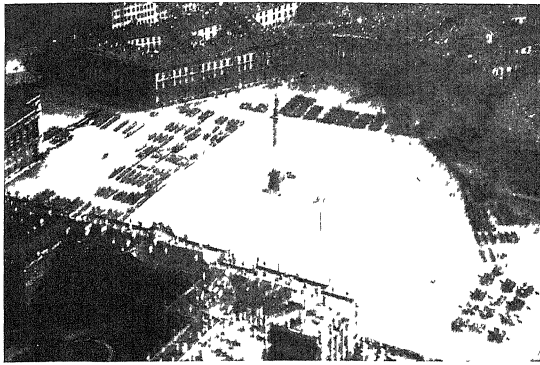
Then an actor came forward who was an excellent imitation, down to the smallest detail, of Prime Minister Kerenski; he asked the crowd for closer attention, and then delivered a speech, supported by rich gestures, which was followed, as in reality, by a storm of ovations. Officials with backs assiduously and humbly bent, presented their petitions, then came the money-givers with great sacks, and after them the nobles. Kerenski's famous Battalion of Women

appeared, and a group of war disabled with a big placard inscribed, "We wish to carry the war to a victorious end!" Meanwhile, the masses on the "red" platform had organized, and were striking up revolutionary songs and loud appeals to the Soviet Government, which were taken up by thousands and thousands of voices Simultaneously, the general attack on the "white" platform began, some of the defending troops went straight over to the revolutionary side. In the meantime, Kerenski's ministers, as before, sat quietly and peacefully round their table, nodding their heads like Chinese dolls

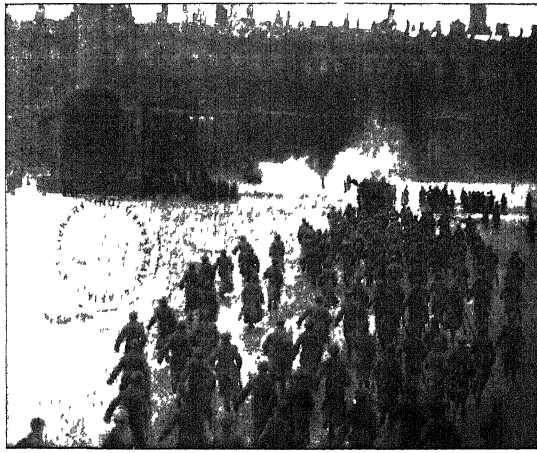
The bitter struggle which was now fought out on the bridge between the "white" and the "red" tribunals, ended, after much exchange of blows, and in accordance with the real history of the communist upheaval, in the victory of the Bolsheviks, who were now opposed only by the cadets and the women's battalion. After the red troops had captured the "white" tribunal, Kerenski's adherents fled to hide in the Winter Palace itself But the pursuers were already hard on their heels, armoured cars and cannon clattered over the square, the air echoed with the salvoes of the cruiser *Aurora* on the Neva, and with the rattle of musketry and machine guns. Then the members of the "white" Government appeared at the lighted windows of the Palace, whereupon the Bolsheviks immediately proceeded to storm this last bulwark of the counter-revolution, and after a brief struggle forced their way into the Palace. Amid the crackling of innumerable rockets and singing from many thousand throats, the victory of communism was at once celebrated

The fight and victory of communism would have found even more effective expression in a mass festival performance which Mayerhold planned to celebrate the third congress of the Communist International on the Khodinskaia field; but it could not be carried out. This scheme gives us the best notion of the ideas which the Bolshevists had in mind in representations of this kind. Two hundred riders from the cavalry school, two thousand three hundred foot soldiers, sixteen guns, five aeroplanes with searchlights, ten automobile searchlights, several armoured trains, tanks, motor-cycles, ambulance sections, detachments of the general recruiting school, of the associations for physical culture, the central direction of military training establishments were to take part, as well as various military bands and choirs.

In the first five scenes the various sections of the revolutionaries were to have combined to encircle the capitalist fortress, and, with the help of artillery corps, to surround it with a curtain of smoke Concealed by this dense screen, the tanks were to have advanced to the attack and stormed the bastions, while the flame-throwers were giving out an enormous fireball of changing outline.

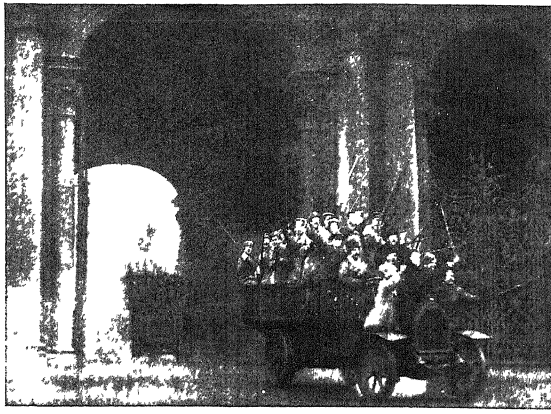


BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF THE WINTER PALACE WITH THE ALEXANDER COLUMN

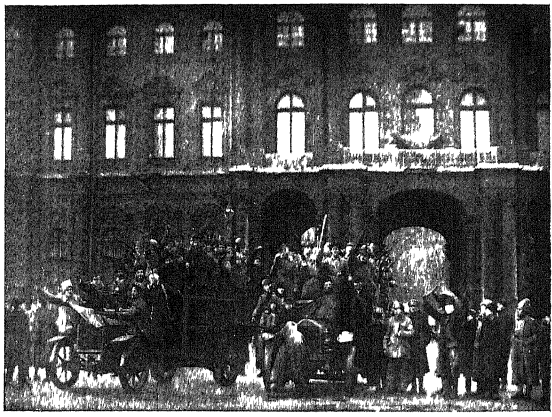


THE AERIALISED REPRODUCTION OF THE REVOLUTION

"Storming of the Winter Palace" with real troops, guns and armoured cars



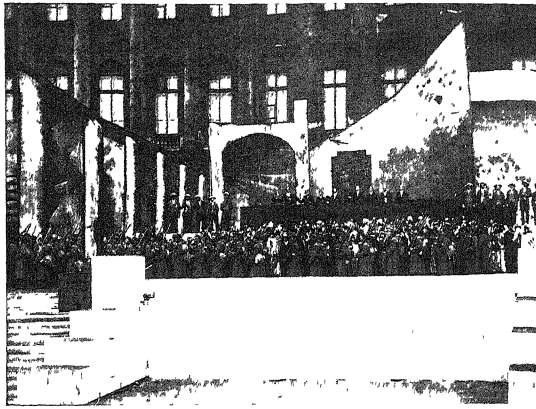
THE "THEATRICALISED" STORMING OF THE WINTER PALACE
Lorries with "revolutionary troops" pass the door



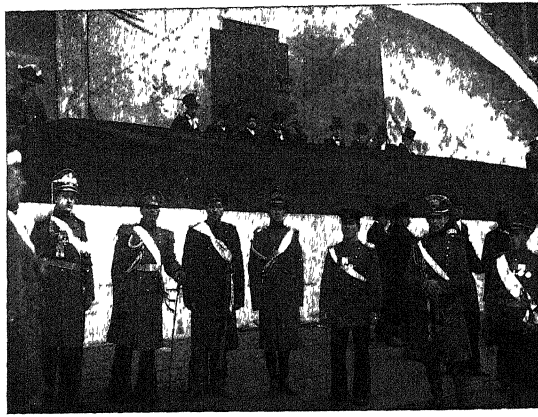
Lorries with troops stop before the Winter Palace

SCENE FROM THE "THEATRICALISED" STORMING OF THE WINTER PALACE
"THE BOURGEOISIE"

KERENSKI'S WOMEN'S BATTALION ON THE "WHITE STAGE"



THE " WHITE STAGE " WITH GOVERNMENT TROOPS FILING PAST



KERENSKI'S BOURGEOIS GOVERNMENT ON THE " WHITE STAGE "

The silhouette of the illuminated smoke would finally have represented a factory with the watchword of the fight inscribed on the walls "What work has created shall belong to the workers." After a great parade of troops, the gymnastic associations on motor-vans were to have shown the people of the future engaged in throwing the discus and gathering the hay into sheaves. Then a general dance, with the motto "Hammer and sickle," was to introduce motions representing industrial and agricultural work, the hammer bearers from time to time crossing in a friendly way their instruments with the sickles of the other group. Rhythmic movements performed by the pupils of the public training schools were to have symbolized the phrase, "Joy and strength—the victory of the creators", now nearing, now retreating from the tribunal, they were finally, in conjunction with the troops, to have been effectively grouped in the "city of the future" The final items of the performance were to have been provided by a display of flying by aeroplanes, with searchlights, fireworks, and a great choral singing, accompanied by the orchestras.

8

Another performance arranged to celebrate the Congress of the Third International is also important for the development of mass festivals. On this occasion, Maiakovski's piece, *Mysterium Buff*, was performed in German The programme was as follows.

"'*Mysterium Buff*,' a heroic-ethical and satirical image of our time written by Vladimir Maiakovski. Setting, construction, and decorations by A Granovski, N. Altmann, and Ravdel, translation by Rita Rait, taken part in by three hundred and fifty actors. '*Mysterium Buff*' signifies our great Revolution, compressed into a stage performance 'Mysterium' means everything great in the Revolution, 'Buff,' its grotesque and ridiculous elements. Thus the verses of this composition contain the slogans of the congresses, the noise of the street, the voice of the newspapers; its action is the life of the masses, the class war, the strife of ideas, a copy on a small scale of the great world within the frame of the theatre. There can be no complete delineation of the Revolution, which demolished everything; therefore the 'Mysterium Buff' is merely the scaffolding of a theatrical piece, continuous motion, which is altered daily by events and is perpetually reforming itself out of new happenings."

"The whole universe is drowned in the deluge of the Revolution," states the scenario of this curious composition, "the only dry spot left is the Pole, and it already has a hole in it. An Eskimo tries to stop the hole with his finger. The rest of humanity surviving from the old settled world, driven by the waves of the upheaval,

crowd round the Pole: seven couples of clean bourgeois, seven couples of unwashed proletarians, a few compromisers, who want to mediate between them, and some other people. Since there is very little room, the intruders kill the Eskimo, who has been keeping the hole plugged. Immediately the fire of Revolution pours out of the opening, they all try to extinguish the flame, and finally succeed in closing the opening again. Then the washed ask the unwashed to do something for the common safety, whereupon these proceed to build an ark.

"The second scene represents their journeyings in this ark. The stage is transformed into the deck of a ship ruled by the Negus of Abyssinia. This is followed by the democratic republic of the bourgeois, until this is also thrown overboard, and the hungry and unwashed seize power. They want to eat and sleep, but the ark splits in two. Then the survivors are illuminated by the consciousness of the need to struggle, they throw away the fragments of their wrecked ship, and rush over masts and yards through the clouds, confidently trusting in their own strength.

From mast to mast, from yard to yard,
On the paths of the sun and the rainbows

"Then the priests drag in Hell to block the way of the unwashed. But no Beelzebub can terrify men who have seen the hell fire of white-hot metal in steel foundries. With the song:

Devils and hell,
With your fists strike down!
The flames dispel!
Storm on! Storm on!

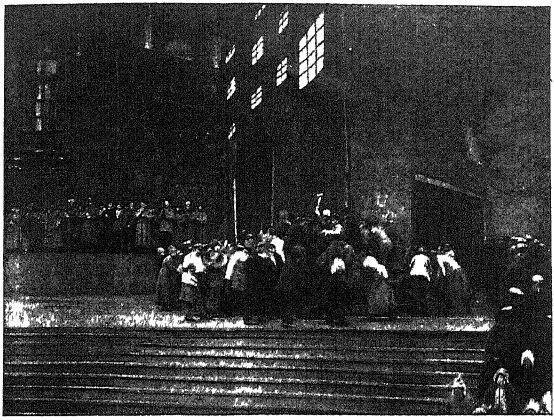
the unwashed lay Hell in ruins.

"The fourth scene represents paradise, the disembodied life of divinity, as extolled by the proclaimers of joys in the world to come and the partisans of gradual reforms. But the marchers have set themselves a different and higher goal, and they rush over the ruins of paradise ever onwards.

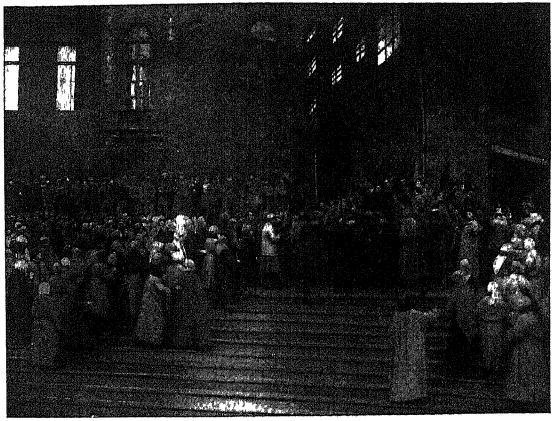
Wheel and swing! No stepping back
Machines bring the happiness we now lack.

"The fifth scene shows the ruins left to the unwashed after war and revolution. It seems almost a hopeless undertaking to try to build anew a happy world on this abode of misery, but the unwashed overcome all obstacles because they see already the dawn of a fairer future rising from the coal pits and petroleum wells.

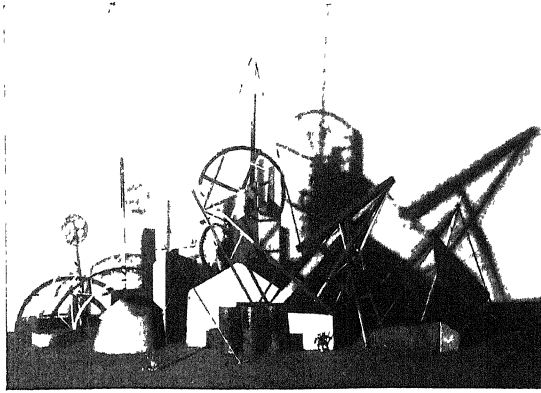
"The sixth scene finally depicts the commune. Joy and amaze-



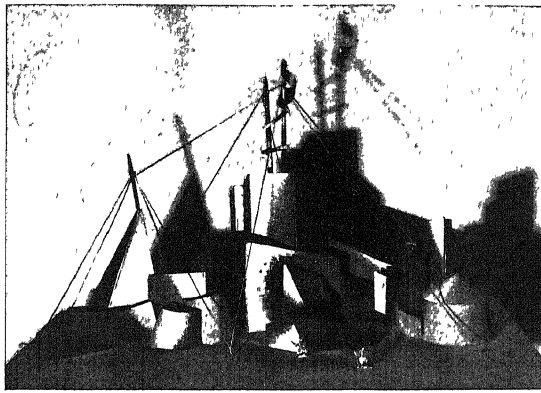
THE "STORMING OF THE WINTER PALACE" THE "RED STAGE"



THE "THEATRICALISED" VICTORY OF THE RED TROOPS BEFORE THE WINTER PALACE



MODEL FOR A GREAT MASS FESTIVAL ON THE KHODINSKI FIELD



MODEL FOR THE REVOLUTION FESTIVAL "BATTLE AND VICTORY" ON THE KHODINSKI FIELD

ment of the unwashed over the marvels of the new world, which rises behind the Hills of Labour A joyful song ends the piece:

> We the song of victory singing,
> Loudly, heartily rejoice
> The International is bringing
> To the whole world freedom's voice!"

It would require a very considerable amount of preconceived enthusiasm to see in this and the other mass festival performances already described, anything but a completely naive symbolism, which keeps turning in a circle on the same spot, or to regard them as anything but the manifestation of an amateurish lack of taste, represented with a colossal supply of external resources It would be an annihilating criticism of the possibilities of socialist art to say that the level of taste in these performances corresponds to the level of the proletariat, as the Bolsheviks maintain. These "compositions" are not, however, the work of proletarians; they originate entirely with the intelligentsia, and merely betray what a poor opinion Bolshevik leaders have of the level of this "mass man," to whom, in the same breath, they assign the sole right to artistic production. All these symbols, all the laboriously thought-out effects of these mass festive performances unmistakably bear the stamp of the artistic, and thus, it may be unconsciously, betray that their authors are not proletarian poets, but in the highest degree Bolshevik aesthetes. Perhaps the "mass man" has the capacity for new artistic creation in him; but, in order to develop it, he must be free of himself to create, without regard to the political desires of the Government. Under such conditions something of real value may well be produced one day, but whatever it is, it will have to be very different from everything which the politicians in Russia to-day offer to us as "proletarian form."

Chapter VIII

THE MECHANIZING OF POETRY

I

THE endeavour to mechanize and "de-soul" art perhaps appears at its crudest in revolutionary poetry and literature, in which the radical innovators were not content with "liquidating Pushkin, Gogol', Dostoevski, and Tolstoi," as one of their propagandist pamphlets puts it, but in which they attempted to eradicate entirely the old meaning and nature of the poetic, and to replace it by something completely new But they were mainly concerned with removing the ancient, erroneous idea that there was such a thing as genius, intuition, vocation, or any "mystical junk" of the kind.

With dry objectivity the Russian physiologists, by innumerable experiments on dogs and many other animals, have shown that every apparently independent and direct expression of the intelligence is a motor reflex, a reaction to a nerve stimulus From the behaviour of a dog, which had acid dropped into its mouth in various attendant circumstances, they drew a number of conclusions about the connection between external irritations and their alleged "soul reactions," and finally arrived at the position that every spiritual act, however apparently spontaneous, is nothing but the effect of a sense stimulus, and will occur every time in the same way in the same conditions with an exactness which may be calculated beforehand. By this doctrine of "conditioned reflexes," talent, genius, monomanias, flashes of insight, and intuitions were all explained in the same way on purely mechanical lines Zavis, a pupil of the famous physiologist Pavlov, attempted to prove in an exhaustive investigation that the figure of Don Quixote is a perfect example of such conditioned reflexes. In an analogous way the adherents of this school then endeavoured to represent the whole art of poetry, in all its forms, as "mere data for the physiological law of conditioned reflexes."

Here, as in other cases, the Russian materialists have drawn absurd deductions from physiologically correct observations for the recognition, quite true in itself, that every process of thought is

derived from a mechanico-chemical alteration in the brain, does not, of course, bring us a step nearer to the nature of the artist or the genius But to the Bolshevik metaphysicians, this physiological evidence seems to solve completely the whole problem of the art of poetry. Intellectual production to them is no longer an unconscious, mysterious process of the human mind, but a physiological, mechanical process, calculable beforehand, and thus to be regulated at will Therefore, not only is every creative process to be conceived physiologically and rationally, but it is subject also to exact formulae which, it is claimed, make possible the "artistic production of poems, plays, and other literary output of all kinds." The view of some revolutionary poets is in conformity with this rationalist basic conception. They hold that "a poem is nothing but a mere conjunction of sounds, a painting merely a mechanical combination of flecks of colour," so that the laws of art are "merely the laws of putting words together and combining flecks of colour."

This view of the nature of poetry is seen most clearly in the group of "imagists" led by Sheishen'evich and Marienhof, who have long been regarded as the real "shock troops" of the artistic revolution.

The aim of these mechanists of verse technique is described in detail in a brochure of Shershen'evich, *Twice Two are Five*. "The image entirely unconnected with other images is our object, the image *per se*; a poetical work, which contains a 'leading image,' that is, an image to which all the others are subordinate and with which they are interwoven, does not exist for us. The image as such is subject and content. It must form a self-contained unit, since any combination of individual images is a mechanical and not an organic work. A poem is not an organism, but a heaping up of images, any one of which can be removed without loss, just as twenty new ones may be introduced. Only if each unit is complete, is the result a beautiful whole. I am firmly convinced that a book ought to be readable backwards as successfully as the other way round, just as a picture of Iakulov or Erdmann (revolutionary painters) may be hung upside down without any loss."

In another pamphlet, *Futurism without Disguise*, Shershen'evich baldly defines poetry as the art of the combination of words. Maiakovski and his pupils are also of the opinion that poetry is nothing but the most adequate conjunction of parts of speech. Nevertheless, Shershen'evich differs from them because he makes a distinction between the content and the image of a word: "Sometimes I purposely leave the sound element out of account. The content is brought into the word by intellectual work. When the word originated intuitively, it had no definite meaning, no clearly expressed sense, it designated only a certain image." The self-originating

word is, according to Shershen'evich's theory of poetry, in a virgin state; in it the pictorial and visible predominates over the meaning. Historical development produces a gradual predominance of the content over the image and thus leads to a loss of the image Hence, the natural effort of the poet to give currency again to the word newly created by him, and thus to help the image to triumph over the meaning. "Therefore, words must be invented continually In the historical process, the content of the word has devoured the word-image, the contrary must happen now, the image must destroy the content Not the abstract, but the visible word is the material of poetry, not the destruction of the image, but the absorption of the meaning in the image is the evolutionary course of the poetic word."

This not entirely false idea is again immediately carried to absurdity by Shershen'evich's drawing the conclusion that the word must be freed from the content, and that, therefore, grammar must immediately be thrown overboard· "The word is nothing but an animal cry, which escapes from the soul when moved by emotion, and which becomes the word under the influence of human thought."

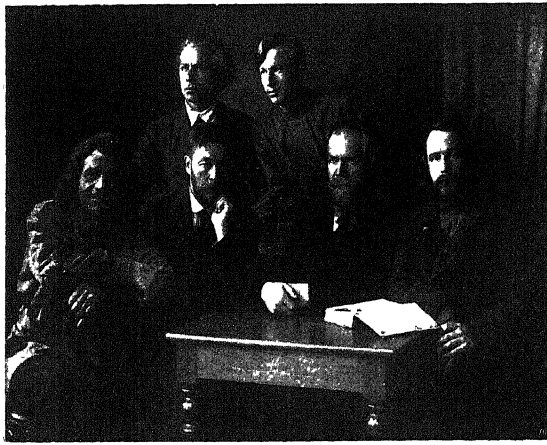
The "Ego-futurists" also represent similar views, their leader, Khlebnikov, declares that the word contains an independent power which organizes the material of feelings and thoughts Therefore, he strives to reach back to the root of the word, and builds whole poems on a single root of this kind.

In addition to these conceptions of the nature of poetry, which are still in some sort felt artistically, you meet also in Russia the view that the art of speech is nothing but "word chemistry of the scientifically enlightened proletariat" In order to advance this curious science in a fitting way, a special "laboratory" is to be founded, where, under the direction of trustworthy "word chemists," a number of experiments in the manufacture of new words, rhythms, and forms are to be carried out This laboratory for synthetic word chemistry is then to be recognized by the Government as a higher proletarian educational institute Equally abstruse are the experiments which have been going on for a considerable time in the "Briusov Institute" There poetry is separated into its elements, analysed, and reformed; it is claimed that, during the process, it loses all kind of mysterious magic Here receipts for poems are prepared, and the hope is openly expressed that soon writing poetry will be imparted to everybody, just like piano playing, reading, or writing. Henceforth, the art of poetry is to be a subject in the elementary schools, as drawing used to be, the children will be taught all the knacks and tricks, the mastery of which formerly brought undeserved fame to a handful of selected individuals.

In its aim of forming geniuses, the Briusov Institute has two

A. LUNACHARSKI

THE COMMITTEE OF THE "RED AUTHORS" CLUB IN MOSCOW



WORKMEN AND PEASANT AUTHORS
Group from the "Smichka" Association in Leningrad

sections at its disposal, the productive and the instructive; the one trains writers, poets, translators, and critics of "the highest quality" in a three years' course; the other produces scholars, publicists, and politicians to educate the great masses of the people. This section also contains two cabinets, which are exclusively devoted to working out various literary problems from the point of view of the Marxist critique

Out of five hundred and fourteen students, the Institute was able, after only a year's working, to point proudly to thirty-six graduate poets. But, in spite of this great educational success, there is a group of literati who wholly deny the right of such institutes to exist, and champion free autodidactic methods These "Radicals" have formed a union of their own, and try by their own efforts, without the help of a definite course of study, to learn the laws of art and poetry, as well as those of the new social life Both these groups of devotees of poetry are completely at one in the belief that art can be completely taught and learned.

This is in truth the great achievement of revolutionary thought: that the connection between art and conditioned reflexes, between Don Quixote and the excretion of spittle in a dog, has been definitely fixed, and that poetry has been defined as the mechanical combination of sounds and tones according to a chemical formula. However much opinions may differ on whether poetry is better written by technical, physiological, or chemical methods, there is complete certainty that poetry has nothing whatever to do with intuition, endowment, or talent, for these are bourgeois and counter-revolutionary prejudices.

2

But everything was not yet accomplished by this victory over the antiquated theories of genius or vocation; in accordance with the doctrines of Bolshevik philosophy, all knowledge and all production had immediately to be made available for political propaganda. Therefore, revolutionary poetry, too, was required to have a utilitarian influence. The conception that poetry and literature exist to beautify life or to reflect it in its true form was officially rejected as a mediaeval superstition. Henceforward the sole aim of art was to be the systematic re-shaping of life in conformity with communist requirements. The new poems, novels, and plays were no longer to represent feelings, thoughts, or living types; they had to invade life itself and re-shape it in the communist direction. "Art does not represent, but makes new life. It is not a mirror in the hands of the futile bourgeois, but a hammer in the fist of the proletarian."

The first demand made on a good Bolshevik poem was revolu-

tionary effect, the Bolshevik ode must excite the public, must goad them to rebellion, rage, and hate The productions of Dem'ian Bednyi, in particular, fulfil this demand; he produces poems of an inciting and inflammatory kind on the order of the Party Executive in any quantity desired He does not, it is true, belong to the " word mechanics," and for this reason he is never at any loss for " frightful rage," " flaming hate," or similar feelings against the bourgeoisie, foreign enemies, or the " Nep-people " His poems transmit these feelings to the masses and " socialize " them, in the sense of the Marxist theory of the " superstructure " It is Dem'ian Bednyi, too, who is the author of the " Communist Marseillaise "; the most inflammatory verses of this battle-song run as follows

" Up! up! ye people, avengers of the world's suffering!
Wake up! Arise! Strike dead, strike dead!
Strike them all dead, the malefactors,
All those who have stolen our bread!
All those who have stolen our bread!
Ye workers, now smash to pulp
With your fists that phantom, God!
You are master of the fate of the world!
Ye workers, you are free, free!!!
The end is come, you rulers, the end is come!
Arise, ye people, triumph!
Onwards! Triumph! March, march!
Onwards! And—Shot on shot! "

Another poem of Dem'ian Bednyi is in the same strain. It is called *The Highway*, and has won great fame in Russia as a song in glorification of the life and struggle of the proletariat After the fight between the workers and the oppressors has been described in a flood of invective, the words tumbling over each other, the poem finally celebrates the victory of the revolutionary masses:

" Who is there?! Missed! This time you shoot wide!
Come on, to the devil with your fopperies, you masters!
Down with you! We need no lickspittles, you masters!
Wag your tails ever so pitifully! We strike you on the jaws, you masters!
Down with you! Down!
You there whose bones are rotting in fat,
Lie down, bloodhound! Knacker, hold your tongue!
You incarnate human filth,
Fall dead in a ditch!
Down with you! Down!
The road is open!

Down with the whole crew!
One, two!
One, two!
March, march!
The bourgeois state is a rubbish heap!
The proletariat has taken over the Government
Interfere not!

* * * *

And the highway shakes
Beneath the tramp of proletarian feet . . ."

Dem'ian Bednyi's poems have always given complete satisfaction to his customers, the Party Executive and the "Red General Staff," for these verses actually did exercise a great influence on the masses Troops, already sick of the fight, were stimulated to fresh enthusiasm by the delivery of Bednyi's rhythms, and after recitals of poems of this kind, they often continued to crack the enemy's skulls, long after they had ceased to show any real desire to do it.

However tasteless and crude this savage and brutal invective, these perpetual calls to murder, may seem to a European, they were of the greatest significance and importance to the Bolshevik leaders in the heavy days of the struggle against the counter-revolution. As a mark of their recognition of the conspicuous services which Dem'ian Bednyi rendered to the Soviet State, the Government, in 1923, granted him the highest distinction in their power to bestow, the Order of the Red Flag. Henceforth, Bednyi was the official house and court poet of the Kremlin, and, as such, had an unusually high and honourable position. The judgment of the leading personalities on his achievements is best seen in a preliminary puff of his poems written by Trotski· "He is not a poet who has approached the Revolution, stepped down to it, and accepted it; he is a Bolshevik in the poetic arm of the services. The Revolution is for him not material for poetry, but the supreme authority which has placed him at his post. There is nothing of the dilettante in his rage and hate; he hates with the well-weighed hate of the revolutionary party of the world. Taken as a whole, his poems represent a unique phenomenon, such as without doubt has never been seen before. Dem'ian has not founded a school: he himself is a product of the school whose name is the Communist Party of Russia, created for the needs of a great epoch, which could not easily be repeated."

The communist leaders of a village in the Kostroma Government arranged a festival in honour of Bednyi and assigned him a feast day, like a saint.

This poet, who is so glorified by the Government Departments and the Party, has, however, no outstanding talent. Bednyi, who is

of peasant origin, merely took over the traditional form of the Krylov fable, which belongs to the beginning of the nineteenth century, and imbued it with revolutionary satire His poems are always mere occasional pieces for propagandist purposes, which show no trace of special inspiration. The success of Dem'ian Bednyi, which is unquestionable, depends mainly on the popularity and easiness of his forms and his language, and on the primitive nature of his symbolism.

3

Although Trotski and the other leaders of the Government overlook the lack of a new mechanical technique in Dem'ian Bednyi, other revolutionaries soon appeared, who reproached the official poet with adhering too closely to the old conventional forms, using traditional rhythms, and thus being to a certain extent reactionary. These dissatisfied grumblers allied themselves to the futurist poet Maiakovski, whom they proclaim to be the real poet of the Revolution For Vladimir Maiakovski was also master of the chief qualities necessary for a Bolshevik poet, " the resounding throat and the strength of a boxer, the crude manners and gifts of noisy street boys and impudent highwaymen " Maiakovski's *Left March* and his other revolutionary songs are no way behind Dem'ian Bednyi's work in brutality, ruthlessness, and coarseness Take, for example, the opening of the *Left March*.

" On! forwards! March, march!
Enough of phrases and dodges!
An end to idle chatter!
You have the word, Comrade Mauser!
You laws of the time of Adam and Eve,
You laws, we break you. The world is torn to tatters
Onward! Onward!
Hound on, on, on, on!!!
Left!
Left!
Left! "

Maiakovski's poem, *150 Million*, a great epic of the Revolution, a kind of Bolshevik *Lied von der Glocke*, nevertheless contains some passages which cannot be denied a certain vividness

" Down with the world of romanticism!
Down with the defeatist singers of dirges!
The pessimistic faith of our fathers!
Down with the madness of possession in all its forms! . . .
Be athletically valiant, with tense muscles,

Full of the religion of action!
Your soul!
Steam, compressed air, electricity!! . .
As for the almsgivers, the navel-gazers,
Let the axe dance over their bald pates!
Slay! Slay!!
Bravo. and skulls are good for ash-trays
Onward!
Drive your elbows into ribs like iron spikes,
Crash your fists into the jaws of the elegant charity gentlemen
tightly buttoned into frockcoats!
Your knuckle-dusters into their noses!
Tabula rasa!
Whet your teeth,
Bite into the time,
Gnaw through the fence! . . .
New faces! New dreams!
New songs! New visions!
New myths are we flinging on,
We are kindling a new eternity .

* * * *

To all, who beat their breasts there,
Proclaim
'Fed long enough on stinking putrefaction!'
How long still?
Ample! ample!
Enough! enough!
An end! an end!
We will, we can
Do no more! . . .
Unite!
Come forth from the darkness of centuries!
Keep in step! March!
(Your signature here, comrade,
If you agree with me .)
Revenge is the master of ceremonies.
Hunger the organizer.
Bayonet, browning, bomb . . .
Onward! Keep time!"

In still another point Maiakovski was superior to Dem'ian Bednyi: he was able to perform further great services to his party in the period of construction, when it was no longer merely a question of composing poems to "socialize rage and skull-smashing" He produced verses in celebration of the fight against laziness in Govern-

ment offices, or the propaganda for re-asphalting the streets. Whenever the Government was trying to combat any institution which displeased them, they would confidently turn to Maiakovski, and he never disappointed them he could always turn out an inflammatory and effective propagandist poem on the desired subject

Finally, Maiakovski arrived at the point of carrying on poetry purely as a trade; he proudly proclaimed that he had established a " word workshop," and was in a position to supply every revolutionary, on receipt of a simple order, " promptly and on easy terms," with any quantity of poetry desired. In his view there is no such thing as art as such, but merely art for everyday use; therefore he confines himself to writing topical and utilitarian poems He has given us songs against private vodka-distilling, verses on the usefulness of soap, and an enormous number of other poetical outpourings on similar themes

Of course, the " good revolutionaries " belonging to the imagist group also tried not to be left out of the fabulous boom in the poetry industry carried by on Bednyi and Maiakovski. They announced that they were also capable of making " prompt delivery " of all requirements of everyday revolutionary use But since Maiakovski and his friends had already captured a large number of the markets, the imagists were obliged to shift to another branch of industry, anti-religious propaganda seemed the most likely outlet. Henceforward, the imagists supplied especially all demands for poems and dramas in this field, and the achievements of their leader Marienhof conformed to the specifications of even the most fastidious " Komsomoltsy." [1] Marienhof could justly boast that his verses, in the hands of anti-religious agitators, were " real Russian ' nagaikas,' " [2] to " lash the languishing bodies of Christ and the Virgin Mary."

Since there was a danger that untrustworthy elements or even counter-revolutionary agents might creep into Bolshevik verse manufacture, influential " Radicals " soon demanded that the work of this industry should be supervised by communist Party officials; thus trusty officials were to test the number of adjectives used, and the metre of lines, rhythms, and sound combinations, from the point of view of their fitness to produce revolutionary effects on the audience. Maiakovski's poems, in particular, were regarded as a model for the regulation product in every respect, as they satisfied all revolutionary demands in an exemplary way, even from the technical point of view. He alone succeeded in attaining that " Chicagoism of the soul " for which every true Bolshevik has striven, he also presented his faithful followers with the immortal " Laughter-schedule," which must be used to " shatter by mighty

[1] See p. 187.

[2] Cossack whip.

PORTRAIT OF THE WRITER, F. SOLOGUB
(Drawing by Annenkov)

PORTRAIT OF GORKI
(by I Annenkov)

merriment the sneaking fear of the old gods which still persists in the proletarian masses "

4

But however great the honour paid to this triple star in the poetic heaven of Soviet Russia, Dem'ian Bednyi, Maiakovski, and Marienhof, the recollection of the theory of the "superstructure" soon cropped up, which demanded that artistic forms should conform to the "economic structure of society." Since the social structure of Russia is based on the principle of collectivity, art also should assume a collective character, with which the recognition of individual poets as representatives of the communist idea is inconsistent. Consequently, a collectivist humanity must also demand a collective poetry, and thus they arrived at the view that true Bolshevik poetry and literature must be completely impersonal.

This new endeavour was to be expressed both in the kind of production and in its content and effects The poet Bogdanov proclaimed the view that a real proletarian work of art could only proceed from a collectivity; at his instigation, special workshops were established in which several "word workers" combined to produce joint poetic works.

In many of the almanacs of the new Russian literature, works are actually to be found under the authorship of a "Group of Twenty-three," a "Group of Fourteen Poets," or the "Poets' Circle of the Village of Riasan" These poetic workshops proudly point to their mass-production, and are justified in doing so; for quantity is the criterion of the collective, in contrast to the antiquated, individualistic. and reactionary valuation by quality. Many of these undertakings publish half-yearly balance sheets, in which their output is given: the "Group of Twenty-three," for example, looks back with satisfaction to a six months' output of eighty-seven poems, twenty-four works of *belles lettres*, and sixteen plays.

Nothing then remained for the "individual" princes of poetry, hitherto so exalted, if they did not wish to be shoved aside altogether by the urge towards the collective, but forthrightly to suppress their individual existence, and "gladly join the stream of the impersonal, nameless mass." Maiakovski even went so far as to disown his own name entirely in later works; true, under the tacit assumption that everyone would know without it that he was the author. The whole Russian people signs as author of his *150 Million*, whereby not only does the fame pass to these one hundred and fifty millions of men, but the responsibility for the work as well. Maiakovski plainly trusted to the fact that, under the existing strict régime, no one would dare to dispute the authorship with him, although many

would certainly have liked to do so. Maiakovski's statement on authorship in his work is as follows

> " One hundred and fifty million
> That is the name of the composer of this poem.
> The rattling of shot and shell
> That is its rhythm
> Squalls of fire flung zig-zag,
> Fire-damp, tread mines—
> Mine explosions, bursting,
> House leaping on house —
> I am a talking machine.
> Paving stones whirl about.
> Let your tread press the soil
> Jangling like letters of the alphabet
> One hundred and fifty million.
> Stamp!!
> And thus this edition was printed here."

The fact that Maiakovski has become the champion of collective poetry is particularly interesting, because a few years previously this author touched the acme of arrogance and individualist snobism The same Maiakovski who now, in his *150 Million*, gives the credit of authorship to the anonymous mass, earlier wrote poems and plays which he not only signed as author, but even incorporated his name in the title. One of his tragedies is entitled *tout court*, *Vladimir Maiakovski*, a collection of satirical verses is called *Maiakovski laughs*, *Maiakovski smiles*, *Maiakovski makes merry* The content of his poems, too, was always intimately related to his own personality, and the name of Maiakovski occurred continually in the text.

At that period, before the outbreak of collectivist enthusiasm, all the works of this author showed the effort to lay on originality with a trowel; this is evidenced by the title he gave to a love story, *The Cloud in Trousers*. At that time, he and his friends had preached " egoism," and glorified anti-social feeling and the morality of the demi-monde.

But a slight suggestion of a " communizing " tendency may be noted as early as this most individual and snobbish period; he had given many of his works the same titles as those of well-known works of earlier authors: for example, one of his works was called *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*, and another, *The Night before Christmas*. Even then Maiakovski anticipated the denial of the distinction between *meum* and *teum*, by making no distinction between his titles and the titles of other people.

But the collectivist character of Bolshevik poetry could not be content merely with impersonal authorship, but soon was forced to

PORTRAIT OF THE WRITER SAMIATIN

(Drawing by I Annenkov)

PORTRAIT OF AN AUTHOR
(By I Annenkov)

aim also at an impersonal method of circulation. Henceforward, the works of the new authors were no longer to be recited by individual speakers to a small and restricted audience, but declaimed by great masses on public squares in a sort of choral singing without music The technical aid of megaphones, loud speakers, and gramophones was also put at the service of prosody, during the war against the white-guard General Iudenich, Dem'ian Bednyi's war songs were communicated to the whole army by the aid of such appliances. The effect of these recitations, it is claimed, was not only to increase considerably the fighting spirit of the Bolshevik troops, " they also caused Iudenich's soldiers to desert in crowds to the Bolsheviks "

In a completely consistent manner, ever since the beginning of the collective era, every effort has been made to avoid anything which could in any way recall an individual hero. In the epic, *150 Million*, it is always a question solely of the impersonal, suffering, fighting, and triumphing mass, Gastev, too, declared that his poems did not aim at expressing the experiences of individuals, but those of a whole class This endeavour to replace the individual hero, the representative of an individualistic period which Russia had got beyond, by the " collective hero," was most strongly manifested in prose and dramatic compositions Finally, they arrived at a great number of stage plays simply entitled " Mass," the subject of which was nothing but the growth of the revolutionary mass, or some similar entirely impersonal process. A novel by Stepnoi dealt with the October Revolution in Orenburg in such a way that, not an individual character, but the entire population of the town, appeared as hero, in a story by Malishkin, the whole of the red troops in their struggle with their enemies is the active and leading character The design of creating a collectivist literature resulted in a whole series of works in which the experiment was made of enumerating events as in a catalogue, as, for example, the story, *Russia 1917 to 1923*, by Sosnovski, of which the sub-title was *Not Fairy Tale, not Legend, but Reality*. This work deals with the history of a village, the experiences of its inhabitants with the Tsarist authorities, the Revolution, and the Soviets. Another work of Sosnovski's, *The Bogatir Works*, tries to represent a factory as a living organism with its own sufferings, hopes, and struggles. Another writer, Pil'niak, in his tale, *The Third Capital*, attempted to describe a " collectivity," but, indeed, not all the asseverations of the author that it has no hero and no plot can disguise the fact that this novel, in the last resort, merely treats of a number of individual beings.

But even these works fell short of the Bolshevik idea, for they did not unite all the requirements; if the author was a " collectivity," the hero was an individual person; if the " mass man " was the hero,

the author proved to be in the singular. There was still lacking a synthesis of these two forms of collectivism, a poem with both an impersonal author and an impersonal hero.

It is true that voices were heard which, in the midst of all these theoretical speculations, sanely pointed out the lack of vitality and the remoteness from life of such experiments This feeling is characteristically expressed in a pamphlet written by a Russian proletarian on *Factory Poetry and Poetry Manufacture*· "Poets are not everyday phenomena, they are not the weekdays, but the high days of history. Although it may be thought that this is a commonplace bit of schoolboy wisdom, people are shutting their eyes to it in Russia. Countless 'poets' circles' are developing, but they are all made up of people who are poets by trade, not by vocation. If in a month or a year fewer poems are composed than before, our journalists regard this as a regrettable lapse, whereas they rejoice if the number of works 'exceeds the norm' It is true that the low level of quality is noted, but the quantity of the output is welcomed in spite of this Perhaps in the future we shall have a collectivist poetry, but to-day we are not in a position to imagine it concretely, just as we can form no conception of the music of the future But one thing is beyond all doubt every poet is an individualist in accordance, not with the object, but with the subject of his creation Therefore, the poet of the street is also necessarily individual, in the meaning of personality raised to a higher power; otherwise he is not a poet but a craftsman History may have given us examples of collective art, but they are all by bards in whose hearts the great myths of the past were produced, and in this sense, individualists"

The dictatorship of a little group of literary men was bound soon to get farther and farther away from a sound and noble artistic life, and to lead to the narrow, petty activities of party politics. All the great eternal problems of art in Russia finally deteriorated into idle discussions of whether or not a play or a novel could stand the inspection of the Bolshevik supervisory authorities. There was increasingly less concern about literary value and increasingly more about propagandist and political significance. A petty sectarian spirit in an ever more arrogant form was abroad, with a bad taste of political spying and toadyism. Many of the new poets' circles became espionage bureaux for the Bolshevik party, and set themselves the task of ferreting into all the moods of the poets' souls, to find bourgeois or counter-revolutionary characteristics The relations between literature and the secret police, the *Cheka*, became more and more close; authors who refused to place their intuitions willingly and absolutely at the disposal of the party interests of the moment, whose language deviated from Dem'ian Bednyi's "Rage-

pathos-schedule," were objects of suspicion and denounced and persecuted as counter-revolutionary.

5

In the first years of the Revolution, when the whole of Russia was still hypnotized by the great " battle propaganda " and " war enthusiasm," it was comparatively easy for poets to put their inspiration at the service of the State and the Party At that time it was, in fact, a question of an elemental national movement, which held almost everyone under its sway, and which might rouse an artistically felt emotion Then it was conceivable that poems which celebrated in powerful utterances the passionate outbreak of rage of the enchained mob against the old régime did proceed from a real emotion

However, emotional militant communism was retransformed by the new economic policy into the drab of everyday, and then evil days began for writers anyone who, in spite of the " iron songs " in his heart, still preserved a real poetic feeling, must have found it difficult to make up his mind still, in time of peace, to go on inciting to hate and destruction. But those countless " war poets " who had made a name for themselves in the stormy years of the Revolution by means of an artificial and unreal emotionality thought the moment had come to annihilate, by the help of the political authorities, everything which had formerly showed itself eternally superior to them in inborn capacity and native talent. However, the deep-hidden aim of the materialistic communist spiritual revolution seemed to be to replace the myth of talent and artistic vocation once and for all by the supremacy of subtle and coolly sophistical lack of talent Just as the political upheaval had made poverty triumph over riches, a spiritual revolution was also to secure for the spiritually poor the longed-for victory over the spiritually rich.

By ruthless and unrelenting persecution, all talent was to be eradicated, and the triumphant dictatorship of anonymous incapacity established. But just as the revolutionizing of Russian economic life, morals, and everyday customs could not complete the whole work in a mighty onset, and, as a result, produced a half-way world of fantastic incompleteness, so the campaign of the " ungifted mediocrities " against talent could not lead immediately to a final victory, but produced nothing but a state of suspension between ability and the lack of it, between inspired poetry and drilled propagandist phrases, between winged rhythms and vulgar invective.

The " Proletcults " must certainly be regarded as the élite of that later Bolshevik " poetic front." They are associations for the

advance of proletarian culture, the first group of which was founded by Lunacharski, afterwards a People's Commissar, as early as the 'nineties, at a time when the proletariat, "hemmed in" by the bourgeoisie, tried to support and encourage its own poets. At that time Kirilov, Alexandrovski, Gerasimov, and Gastev were looked upon as the chief representatives of this school

After the proclamation of the Soviet Republic, these Proletcults took over leadership in art, and at first employed themselves in the destruction of everything traditional Soon, however, a sharp discussion arose on the best revolutionary tactics, and later a split occurred in these proletarian poets' circles; under the leadership of Kirilov, the Leningrad proletcult group split off, because they were not in agreement with Gerasimov's views. Gerasimov wanted to incorporate the results of bourgeois artistic efforts in proletarian literature, and with their help "to build a dome, higher than Mont Blanc"

Although the Proletcults had from the beginning created a powerful organization, which ultimately included three hundred branch unions, yet they did not succeed in maintaining their intellectual rule over Soviet Russia. Even in the first period of the Revolution, they were violently pushed aside by the "futurists," who proved themselves more alert, and soon, though also only temporarily, assured for themselves the "monopoly of proletarian poetry" The poets of the Proletcults lost no opportunity of opposing the futurist "usurpers" with the utmost vigour, accusing them of counter-revolutionary opinions and reactionary aims, but they had no luck in this campaign. It is true that the "futurist poetic government" soon fell from the height to which it had so quickly climbed, but the Proletcult did not succeed in taking its place. Complete anarchy broke out, in which now one group, now another, seemed to gain the upper hand Meanwhile, internal disintegration was threatening the Proletcult: the forms of their organization continued to exist, but internal differences of opinion steadily increased.

When, towards the end of 1922, the "new economic policy" set in, many of the members resigned from the Proletcults, because they could not reconcile themselves to the compromises which were then aimed at in the political and ideological spheres. For this reason, in order to preserve their "orthodox purity," the radicals founded a new poetic group called "October," of which Semén Rodov rose to be the leader. The old organization of the Proletcults, which was later led by Madame Dodonova and the proletarian dramatist Plenev, sank more and more under the influence of the intellectuals and their latest fashions Finally, the groups, which at the beginning had waged such bitter warfare against futurism,

came wholly under the intellectual rule of the futurist Tret'iakov and his disciples.

The " purely orthodox " or " Octobrists," on the other hand, continued to represent the most extreme tendencies of proletarian poetic art; they produced also the so-called " Napostovtsy," who congregated round the periodical *Napostu* (*On Guard*). Certain other proletarian groups of poets, which had arisen in the interval, formed a sort of fighting alliance with them. Such were the " Spring of Labour," the " Young Guards," the " Vogranka " group, and finally the Tsaritsy Association of Proletarian Authors, " Tsapp " for short, which consisted of communist artisans, shoemakers, tailors, and carpenters.

These Bolshevik poetic groups were united, on the one hand, in the Moscow Association of Russian Authors (the " Mapp "), and on the other in the General Association of Proletarian Authors (the " Vapp "). The basic tendency of these associations consisted in their " not copying life, but trying to systematize and organize it by means of the word, in the Marxist conception." The best known adherents of the " Mapp " group are Besylmenski, Svetlov, Kuznetsov, Korenev, Rodov, and Libedinski.

In the " proletarian front " of these radical literary associations must also be included the " Kuznitsa " (*The Smithy*), which, though it formed an independent group, may ideologically be included in the " Mapp "; they are regarded as the " picked troops " of proletarian poetic art. Dem'ian Bednyi was a product of the Smithy. This circle of poets, whose motto is " Style is class," in all its associations represents the strictest principles, and has fought most vigorously against the futurist " fellow-travellers." Besides the proletarian poetic group and the futurists, some other little associations also strove for a new art. Although the attitude of these poets towards proletarian tendencies is quite accommodating, they have, nevertheless, really very little to do with the Revolution itself, and do not play any particular part in political life. One of these associations, which calls itself " The Circle," by preference deals with the relation of the Russian to the political upheaval, but not with a propagandist aim. The men of this group have no preconceived Party ideology. Among the most important adherents of this school may be mentioned Malishkin, Budantsev, Soshchenko, Ognev, and Nikitin. From the poetess Seifulina, who is also a member of this association, we have a number of tales, which have the character of peasant legends, and which in this respect are allied to the national tradition.

Another literary club calls itself the " Serapion Brotherhood." Its members have produced a peculiar revolutionary literature, which is distinguished particularly by cultivated forms. Victor Shklovsky, the leader of this group, demands from his disciples

exhaustive formal studies, especially of foreign literature It was the Serapion Brotherhood who did most to popularize in Russia the American form of short stories

With them is associated the poet Zamiatin, one of the few really gifted authors in the new Russia In his novel, *We*, he has described in a fairly independent manner the future of Russian culture after the realization of communism

Mention should also be made of the adherents of "symbolism," who are grouped round Fedor Sologub, they emphasize the non-political nature of the poetic art and regard themselves as the direct successors of the Russian classics, also the "cosmists," a proletarian group in Leningrad, allied to the Smithy, and finally the literary federation of the "Adamists." The last seek expression exclusively in the word itself, and pay no attention to combination, nor any thought content whatever.

It was against these more or less non-political schools that the attacks of the "war poets," the Napostovtsy, and the Smithy were directed.

6

The attempt to regard all creative literature from the angle of party politics, finally went to such unendurable lengths that even some otherwise quite trustworthy communists finally protested against this wrong-headed interference. In an official report on *The Functions of the Communist Party in Artistic Literature* Vorovski warns his comrades against the intellectual terror exercised by the Bolshevik writers, who "forbid the description of the real life of humanity and of the problems of everyday life and the Russian Revolution," suffer no depicting of living men, but dictatorially demand "wooden red pictures of saints" Vorovski sees in these tendencies nothing but helpless groping and the danger of an "industrial scholasticism"; he shows in his report that under such a régime the most gifted poets must perish, and that "the suffocating atmosphere of proletarian literature is the greatest danger for the further normal development of real art" "Endless exclusions and exceptions," he goes on, "reorganizations and regroupings, petty politics and incessant quarrelling have already produced a number of quite significant failures. That is because our authors' associations, instead of pursuing broad artistic aims, usually turn into sects, who ostensibly are seeking for a new proletarian art, but are really merely fanatically opposing everything old and traditional. Moreover, the definition of this new proletarian art remains completely abstract and questionable."

Vorovski also complains of the immoderate and useless zeal of

political factions, and of the censorship which in its judgments allows itself to be strongly led by narrow views of party politics; by this means the greatest damage is done to the Revolution, the Party, and literature. It is also entirely wrong-headed to try to force poets into a warlike mood and a revolutionary romanticism; during the civil war there was still some sense in it; but in the period of the " Nep " economy, it was entirely out of touch with reality. The " revolutionary romanticism of the last few years, itself often very abstract and remote from life," was exhausted, and therefore an effort must be made to find a new living expression for the new epoch of the Revolution to take its place. Russian literature must now endeavour to do justice also to the flowing, varied reality of the everyday life of peace, and to produce organic forms from it.

The correct perception which is at the base of Vorovski's report was adopted only by very few Bolsheviks; the majority of those politicians, who had to endeavour somehow or other to justify their own continued meddling in literature, judged the function of the literary art from a very different point of view. This majority, as Vorovski says, " usually recognized as proletarian artists only the painter or poet who managed to reject traditional inheritance as counter-revolutionary lumber, and occupied himself, in abstract experiments, in the search for a communist art." Besides Vorovski another communist here and there opposed the universally practised literary tutelage. Pereversev showed how destructive the effect of the ideology of party politics must be on any true practice of art, since the so-called " proletarian poetry " was nothing but " newspaper reports in the form of *belles lettres*." Proletarian interests themselves were outside all poetical handling; artificially forced *belles lettres* were a " strategical blunder on the ideological front." The communist periodical, *Voniakh*, also advised people at last to get rid of all " ready made formulae " and of " prescribed enthusiasm "; the workers themselves frequently declare that they are fed up with " sentimentality about cannons and industry."

For the grotesque thing about this revival of proletarian art and literature was ultimately the fact that it was only the long-suffering non-proletarians who patiently and resignedly endured these productions, as well as all the rest of the official chicanery, while the workers themselves, with their fresh and unfettered temperament and healthy instincts violently rejected all such excrescences. A formal revolt against the " cubo-futurist " experiments of the sculptors actually took place among the proletariat. With regard to literature, the official representative of the State Publishing Office had to confess that " there is no demand for the products of proletarian poetry writing among the workers," so that the publication of such works had to cease for financial reasons. The cause of this

failure lay in the fact that the modern writers were not in vital touch with the proletariat, and the masses therefore really "understood nothing of what the poets and authors were writing." Libedinski's *Week*, according to the report of this official, was the only book of revolutionary literature published by the State Publishing Office which was frequently bought by the workers; all other modern publications were entirely ignored among this class of the population.

This financial failure in the end forced the State Publishing Office, much against its will, to cease publishing revolutionary poetry and turn its attention to a much more profitable field. After the new literature had proved a bad business speculation, they began to produce in large quantities A B C 's and other elementary school books. It was only now that they grasped the great importance of the fact that Russia showed an enormously high percentage of illiterates, the majority of the population must learn to read and write before they could be in a position to take an interest in modern literature But even the workers and peasants, who had already mastered the lofty art of reading and writing, are much less interested in proletarian poetry than in light and cheerful reading, the novels of Western European authors, and especially detective stories and similar sensational works

Meanwhile, however, an enormous quantity of "revolutionary literature" continued to be produced in Russia. It went on dealing, in accordance with all the rules of propaganda, with the fight between red and white troops, and similar subjects, no longer original Further, "iron songs" were also composed, "sound elements" combined, and everything else that the ritual of Bolshevik loyalty might call for

Thus authors and readers never met· the latter refused to read what the former wrote, and the former dared not or could not write what the latter would gladly have read. Thus here too we find that peculiarly confused half-way world, which has been the result of Bolshevik experiments in every sphere. The reasonable objections and protests of the few were of no avail; as it was a question of a fundamental political dogma, in proletarian literature too, there was no inclination to make any concessions to reason. This is the only explanation of how the proletarian poets' circle, The Smithy, could declare in a manifesto, that the Party is organization, the Party is discipline, the Party is creative power "the proletarian writer outside a party is a writer who has torn himself apart from his class." Thus the verdict of the ungifted against the gifted was finally pronounced, for from this time forth no one dared to be indifferent to, or even merely sympathetic towards, politics, and yet be a poet; every aspirant to the poetic bays must first take out a card of membership of the Communist Party, and join a trade union; only then was

he permitted to take up the pen No one dared any more to be a genius, the only title to be striven for was " comrade "

7

After the criterion of membership of literature had been unequivocally fixed in this way, there were only two alternatives for poets who were not yet members of the Party. either to repair this omission as soon as possible, or else to lay themselves open to endless persecution and annoyance on account of their counter-revolutionary views or political unsoundness. It was, however, by no means easy to become a proletarian, although it was a duty imposed on everyone: the Russian working class is extraordinarily exclusive, and does not immediately admit any stranger into its midst. The strictness with which the ballot is conducted in English clubs, the examination of the family tree, the previous life and the whole marriage connection of every candidate, is a mere formality compared with the radamanthine severity of the proletarian party clubs

The composition of " machine novels " or " iron songs " was not in itself regarded as adequate support for the claim to be raised to the rank of a proletarian poet; membership of the Communist Party alone was not enough to justify admission to that literary club which possessed the monopoly of poetry. Every individual case was strictly investigated, as to how far the candidate could prove his membership of the working classes by a proletarian lineage, even how far back this proletarian nobility reached. There actually was a completely radical group which would admit only ex-factory workers into its ranks, the poets' circle, the " Tsapp," could point with pride to the fact that its membership consisted exclusively of workers and artisans belonging to the Communist Party.

Only this increased narrowing of the concept of a " proletarian poet " can explain how very soon the name " fellow travellers of the Revolution " was contemptuously applied even to the very people who had invented the whole erroneous idea of a " proletarian culture " and carried it through by dictatorial methods. All the futurists and imagists, the creators of the " industry and cannon lyricism," of the " proletarian word compounds," and the " iron songs," on whose " inventions " almost the whole revolutionary generation of poets had been living for years, were soon rejected as " non-proletarians," as " popuchiki," or " fellow-travellers." Almost every one of them had shown a great " white spot " in his previous life, a preproletarian uncollectivist past. Even the author of the *150 Million* could be proved to have previously led a completely individual life as Vladimir Maiakovski, Esq , and to have not

been a member of the Bolshevik Party for many years, thus sentence was pronounced even on this one-time great revolutionary poet

It was the On Guard people, the Napostovtsy, who introduced this political hypersensitiveness into Party literary circles, and who energetically opposed the admission of non-proletarian poets and authors. Fearful and anxious on account of their own complete incapacity, they pointed out the necessity of vigorously shaking off all "fellow-travellers" as "harmful to the proletariat in organizing their class consciousness." Vasdin, a member of this On Guard Group, during a debate on literary policy, demanded that the Party should regard literature exclusively from the political point of view. "People are fond," Vasdin went on to declare, "of maintaining that art is art and other twaddle of the kind But the only question to be considered is how far literature influences the proletarian mass We, the leaders, can of course stand 'white literature,' we have become immune to it, but we cannot allow such books to reach the crowd In particular, we must prevent the bourgeoisie from using literature for their political purposes, and take all measures to aid the Revolution to a poetry of its own. No leaning to the right can be permitted It is a crime to tolerate in silence even the slightest manifestation of a bourgeois, mystical, or otherwise reactionary nature. We should, of course, make use of the 'fellow-travellers,' but only allow them a field of activity if they join our Party"

These bitter attacks on the futurists, which were begun by the proletcult poets and continued with the utmost vigour by the Napostovtsy, only attained their object for a brief period In the end the ineradicable vitality of Maiakovski and his friends were victorious over all attacks The futurists and imagists soon became members of the Bolshevik party, formed a new group with the title "Komfut," and have every hope of soon playing an important part again Since these stormy events, present-day literary Russia is going through a bitter fight between the Napostovtsy and the "fellow-travellers," a fight which finds vent in interminable and fruitless debates.

8

But the hostility of the Napostovtsy extended not only to the futurists and the imagists, but also to the group of "peasant poets" who had long been making a claim to literary leadership. The first traces of this school go back to the beginning of the nineteenth century, so that here, too, the revolutionizing school had to contend with a certain tradition, which itself had from the beginning a sort of socialist character, for the most popular peasant poets, the so-

called " Surikovtsy," had from early times championed the poor and oppressed But a strong religious bent had always prevailed among them, a leaning to faith, to the land and the soil. The works of all these peasant poets, the popularly symbolic myths of Esenin, the poems of Semen Fonin and Alexander Nevesov, were otherwise in no way in conformity with communist principles, for they had not the slightest trace of the technico-mechanical spirit. Therefore, the Bolsheviks thought it necessary to steep the peasantry in their own principles, and to retrain them in accordance with proletarian ideology. This task was entrusted to the proletcult associations, who tried to force the spirit of the ruling factory proletariat on this overwhelming majority of peasants, who formed ninety per cent of the population of Russia These efforts inevitably led to a systematic warfare against all peasant elements in Russian feeling and thought The literary critic Rogashevski complains that the spiritual dictatorship of the proletariat has strayed even into the most remote parts of the Empire, where no working class exists, in vain far-sighted people have again and again pointed out that Russia is the country of the peasants, where even the factory workers have a peasant character and are mostly of rural stock.

The Napostovtsy leader Vasdin, already quoted above, was able, in spite of this, to declare publicly, amid great applause from the audience, that the growth of peasant elements in literature strengthened bourgeois ideology, and that traces of a reactionary spirit could be found in the villages, for which reason peasant poetry must be fought with the utmost energy. In vain did Vorovski urge that all the literary forces of the country, the fellow travellers, the *petite bourgeoisie*, and the peasants, should be united, because the proletariat was bound to welcome every activity which contributes to the spiritual welding together of town and country, only in this way could a true proletarian literature arise. For the poets of the proletcult all had a firm belief that they must aim at the destruction of bourgeois culture; but this in practice led to abstractions, instead of living men, you had a forced and dead symbolism; instead of gradual development, violent torments. As often, Trotski here, too, represented the most reasonable view: in one of the great discussions between the adherents of the various groups, he intervened in the debate, and summed up the gist of the matter in the declaration that the only right course was to treat art as a sphere by itself. " The bourgeoisie understood very well; they used literature and art in the interests of their class, and attained their object by never losing sight of the artistic point of view." In Trotski's opinion, a real new culture cannot arise until the true socialist society has been formed, and the proletarians have ceased to be proletarian. Beyond the enormous class wars still to come, the abolition of classes is the

ultimate aim and the necessary condition for any revival of spiritual life.

Lenin, too, expressed himself in a similar reasonable and far-sighted manner about this problem. Although the Bolsheviks like to maintain that Lenin took no interest in art and literature, and, therefore, had no real understanding, the unprejudiced outsider is bound to state that he grasped the most important conditions necessary for any kind of "Soviet culture" much better than all the mechanically trained professional Soviet poets Once, when he was asked for his opinion in the midst of the great literary strife, he declared that these spasmodic efforts to produce a new art and poetry were vain and useless, it was far more important to devote attention to elementary education, for reading and writing are absolutely necessary to a real proletarian culture

The People's Commissars, Lunacharski and Kamenev, have also become convinced that it would be a waste of time and money to institute further extensive experiments for the "production of a new poetry." But the egg tries to be cleverer than the hen and the priest more papistical than the Pope the creatures of Lenin, Trotski, and Lunacharski noisily demand a proletarian culture, although their leaders have long recognized it to be unattainable.

SAMUIL LITNBERG

NIKOLAI MIASKOVSKI

ANATOL ALEXANDROV

NIKOLAI ROSLAVETS

Chapter IX

BOLSHEVIK MUSIC

I

THE accounts of all Lenin's friends and biographers are agreed in stating that the creator of Bolshevism took practically no interest in art and had no understanding of the value of such "useless spiritual enunciations" The revivers of art, too, the Bolshevik poets, painters, sculptors, and architects, who were trying to crown Lenin's mighty work by their creative activity, complain despairingly about the complete blindness and deafness of the Master, who was unable to grasp the supreme and ultimate manifestations of his own system.

The only significant and important thing for Lenin was practical action, utilitarian policy, everything else which springs from a contemplative existence and really constitutes human culture was indifferent and uninteresting to this fanatic of expediency

Lenin shared this lack of cultural conscience with very many of his compatriots, it is the fundamental characteristic of that specifically Russian extremism which is found again and again even in important representatives of this nation. The best-known example is Leo Tolstoi, who rejected poetry, music, art, and philosophy because he regarded them as "socially useless" things from a practical utilitarian point of view. But whereas Tolstoi reached these fanatical views only after terrible inner struggles, and whereas the great artist may always be discerned even in his most furious attacks on art, this conflict, this suicidal disunion, is entirely lacking in the Bolsheviks The Bolsheviks, too, withdrew from that cultural community in which humanity has felt itself allied through the melody of poetry, the elemental charm of music and the fine arts, they, too, wished to subordinate all these blessings to the laws of utilitarian expediency, to force the great and wonderful world of art into the narrow confines of a system built solely on the instinct of self-preservation. In contrast to Tolstoi, however, there is nothing of tragic greatness in their aberration; they remain flat and arid; they are zealots by their incapacity to understand anything whatever which is not completely and immediately accessible to the vulgar understanding.

Lenin was to some extent a victim of this tragic conflict between the reasonable perception and elemental sensation It is true that in this new age he was the first to preach the destruction of all old cultural values, but that most mysterious and direct of all arts, music, held even him captive He, the great exemplar of level-headedness, who so steadfastly hardened himself against all the seductions of beauty, could not quite free his soul from the temptations of music. He stopped his ears with wax, in order to preserve his level-headedness, but the song of the sirens sometimes penetrated to his heart, and stained his immaculately reasonable mind with lewd magic.

On one occasion, when Lenin heard Beethoven played in public, he said, according to Gorki's account, "I know nothing more beautiful than the 'Appassionata,' I could hear it every day It is marvellous, unearthly music Every time I hear these notes, I think with pride and perhaps childlike *naveté* that it is wonderful what man can accomplish But I cannot listen to music often, it affects my nerves I want to say amiable stupidities and stroke the heads of the people who can create such beauty in a filthy hell But to-day is not the time to stroke people's heads, to-day hands descend to split skulls open, split them open ruthlessly, although opposition to all violence is our ultimate ideal—it is a hellishly hard task."

This simple utterance of Lenin shows in an appalling way the inner conflict which went on in the soul of the "apostle of level-headedness." Those who spoke after him, people like Bukharin, had no trace of this disunion, which made the tragic greatness of Tolstoi and of Lenin too They belonged to a time which was completely steeped in dull level-headedness and unspiritual utilitarianism. There was no longer any struggle of the cultural conscience, they were dull and level-headed to the innermost core of their nature; nothing resounded in their souls, they had utterly degenerated into the "cold madness" of rationalism While Lenin still regarded music as a power which might sometimes seduce a man to treat people tenderly, "to stroke their heads and love them," Bukharin looked on this art merely as a more or less appropriate means for socio-political agitation, for the "socialization of the emotions" Of music, with its age-old magic and all its thrills, nothing remains for Bukharin but a dry problem of the materialistic conception of history. In his opinion, the development of art is determined solely by social conditions Music, in particular, he analyses into a number of elements, which he investigates, one after the other, in the light of their relation to the existing economic situation, because a certain level of production must first be reached if art is to develop, and secondly a settled economic atmosphere is necessary, especially for music.

" In earlier days," Bukharin goes on, " Church music was very popular, but to-day you would have to go far to hunt out a couple of musty, bald old men, and God-fearing old women, who would express a liking for Church music The spiritual branches of society are the highest forms of the ' superstructure,' and it stands to reason that it is the shoot which receives most of the sap of life from whatever soil that germinates Church music was able to play an important part at a time when all arts and all sciences, too, were under the control of the Church and were its slaves The position assumed by music depends on the position of society, how society is determined, and what are its needs, views, and feelings This again is explained by the arrangement of classes and their psychology, which for its part is derived from the economic life of society and its conditions of development "

Music depends principally, in Bukharin's view, on the technique of material production. " Savages do not understand how to construct pianos, without instruments concerts cannot be given nor pieces of music for the piano composed You have only to compare primitive musical instruments with the extremely complicated structure of the modern piano to understand the whole importance of the technique of instrument making. We know that the manufacture of telescopes or pianos belongs to social-material production. Thus it is clear that musical technique is conditioned by the technique of material production."

But the organization of the persons active in music is also " directly or indirectly connected with the bases of social evolution." The arrangement and organization of the members of an orchestra are wholly conditioned by musical technique, and for this reason are bound up with the basis of social evolution, with the technique of material production itself The number of musical associations, their composition, and the extent of their activity are all determined by conditions of social life, by that liking for music which itself again depends on social psychology and thus on class conditions

Even the formal elements, like rhythm and harmony, are, according to Bukharin, also bound up with social life " Many of these elements may be observed in the animal kingdom, as was remarked by Karl Bucher in his famous book, *Labour and Rhythm*: ' The trotting horse and the laden camel move rhythmically, as does the fisherman as he rows or the smith as he hammers. Rhythm arouses feelings of pleasure; but it is not only a lightening of work, but also a source of aesthetic pleasure, and the element of art which is innate in all men without distinction of breeding.' All this is true But rhythm is developed under the influence of social conditions, and, above all, of material labour "

Even the inner form of musical works, their style, is, according

to our author, determined by the process of social life "It is an embodiment of the prevailing psychology and ideology, the expression of feelings, thoughts, moods, and that faith, those impressions, which are in the air . For the rest, style is influenced to a considerable extent by the material conditions of the artistic production concerned, that is, by the quality of the instruments and the form of organization of musical associations. But all these factors depend on the laws of social evolution"

2

As in almost every Bolshevik investigation of a problem, in this case too, many details are unquestionably right, but since the whole method of putting the question is wrong and its real essence is not touched at all, the greater or lesser correctness of individual statements is of no importance It is true that music is performed by means of instruments industrially manufactured, it is true that a composer is a man, who eats, sleeps, works, and probably belongs to a communist authors' or composers' organization; but all this does not explain in the slightest degree what is the inner essence of music A composition can never be grasped by means of an analysis of the conditions of economic production, which have caused the work in question to be produced, but solely by means of musical feeling The problem why one man is musical and another is not, is in no way affected by the discovery that the camel performs rhythmic oscillations as he marches

It would hardly be worth while to examine this sort of investigation more closely if the Bolsheviks had not followed this fundamentally false theory of origins by an equally ridiculous practice of music That, of course, does not mean that no one in Russia any longer practises music in the ordinary meaning of the word. Even under Bolshevik dominion, there are excellent concerts and operatic performances, fine singers, virtuosi, and conductors who conform to traditional principles and satisfy the highest European demands Many foreigners perform in Moscow every year, and Beethoven and Mozart, Liszt and Bach are played.

But in the eyes of strict communists all these musical performances are regarded as bourgeois and reactionary, although a number of serious musicians, who are communists in their political views, oppose this turning of art into politics, and make vain attempts to combat this conception.

To what lengths a dilettante and banal interpretation of the meaning of music can go, if people try to conceive of it from the narrow standpoint of party politics, may best be seen from an extract from the leading Bolshevik ideologue and writer, Sosnovski "When

I sit in the Great Theatre, hear music and look at the red-gold magnificent hall, something rankles in my mind: 'No, no, not that.' . . .

" I will not trouble you further—I will say straight out what I am thinking of and what I long for. . . .

" Have you, honoured reader, ever taken part in an All-Russian Soviet Congress? If you have, I need say no more—you have yourself experienced it. If you have not, then trust yourself to me, give me your hand and I will lead you. . . .

" A Soviet Congress is one of the greatest symphonies the world has ever known. The composer of the symphony is the hundred and fifty million population of a great country. The performers—are thousands of the best sons of this nation. The soloists—the few really gifted men in the history of the world.

" Each symphony is different from every other. Who heard Symphony No. 2 on 26th October 1917 at the Smolny in Petersburg? To my great regret I was unable to be present at this unforgettable and incomparable play. The Decree of Peace, the Decree on the Land, and the Decree on the Repudiation of Foreign Debts—these three chords were enough to shake humanity to the depths of their hearts and to split them into two camps—into friends and enemies of Soviet Russia."

The tastelessness of these banal dithyrambics, in which the repudiation of foreign State debts is styled a chord in a symphony and extolled as such, needs no further comment.

The Bolsheviks, however, did not let the matter rest at empty rhetoric; they soon proceeded to put the new theories of revolutionary music into practice. They began by removing from the orchestra the avowed representatives of individualism, the conductors; proletarian music must express collective feeling and therefore had no use for this " creative " element, which formerly had imposed its personal will on the performers. Therefore, on the instigation of Professor Zeitlin, a " conductorless orchestra " was founded in Moscow, the so-called " Perzimfants," which was in future to cultivate this new artistic form. The works to be performed, as in the case of the collectivities of actors, were to be exhaustively discussed by all the members, and studied in accordance with a general plan, by which means they hoped to do away with the often arbitrary interpretations of individual conductors.

But this " conductorless orchestra " was not really revolutionary, because it played the usual old compositions, such works as were pleasing to the aesthetic feelings of the reactionary bourgeoisie. Therefore, it was important to discover new pieces of music for the revolutionized orchestra. But the same difficulty immediately arose as with the theatrical experiments of Mayerhold and his disciples:

there were no revolutionary composers. "What has up till now been produced in this field," writes Nadezhda Briussova, "is far from being what the awakened musical feeling of the new society desires. The students' organizations have instituted competitions for the best work composed on a revolutionary subject or a revolutionary libretto." Leonid Sabaneev, again, complains that modern composers are wholly unfitted to satisfy the musical needs of the new masses. "It is interesting to note how energetic and united have been the efforts of the new authors to adapt themselves to the revolutionary process of thought, and how, on the contrary, in the sphere of music, we may observe an unparalleled and unique artistic conservatism."

In order to repair this deficiency, there was formed in Moscow in 1923 an "Association for Modern Music," analogous to the existing modernist groups in Western Europe. The founding members of this Russian association were Anatol Alexandrov, Vladimir Derianovski, Pavel Lam, Nikolai Miaskovski, Leonid Sabaneev, Konstantin Saradzhev, Samuel Feinberg, and Viktor Belaev. Nikolai Miaskovski is regarded as the most important of these. He has written mainly symphonic works, but also a number of pieces for the piano.

Miaskovski has further developed the line of Russian music, which leads from Chaikovski through Skriabin and Rakhmaninov; but he tries to intensify the revolutionary note by very *outré* effects and bizarre harmonics. "Miaskovski's symphonies," writes Igor Glabov, one of the best-known Russian musical critics, "may not *a priori* make us enthusiastic by their easiness. Built on classical themes, they are explosive, turbulent, convulsive, torturingly refined, and tastefully unpolished. To unite the ununitable, to connect the unconnected, to impregnate completely major with minor, and inversely to sharpen the tonal function of the chord to the limits of the unexpected, these are Miaskovski's usual methods. They betray a thought which is not to be fettered, a thought, which from a number of associations seeks for bold sound complexes most strongly marked in expression, and combined in a masterly way on a traditional basis. They are poured forth in a complicated, sometimes even paradoxical, manner, in cyclic forms."

One of the boldest representatives of the modern Russian school is Samuel Feinberg. His rhythms are so complicated and tumultuous as to make the plastic form of his compositions suffer greatly, although his melodies are often fairly simple and, in themselves, easily grasped. Anatol Alexandrov, again, is mainly a lyricist and song writer, while Mikhail Gnessin, under the influence of Rimski-Korsakov, revels in exotic Oriental pictures and sound effects.

3

The attempted revolutionizing of opera came up against peculiar difficulties, for here they had to deal not only with a musical, but also with a literary problem. The old opera librettos with their individualistic heroes were bound to offend Bolshevik taste as much as all other theatrical pieces of the bourgeois era. In fact, as Iakovlov writes, doubts even arose " whether fundamentally the artistic form of opera with its peculiar ideology was serviceable for the revolutionary masses. . . . At present public opinion in Russia rejects the old subjects of opera; and attempts have been made, for the moment with little success, to rewrite the librettos of well-known popular operas. . . . Meanwhile, the lack of a composer of talent, satisfactory to the taste of the revolutionary masses, is felt continually, and all the experiments of the Leningrad and Moscow producers to put fresh life into their settings have so far had no great results. Their naturalism and naïve realism is in glaring contrast to the organic nature of opera itself."

Sergei Prokof'ev is regarded as the relatively most important opera composer of present-day Russia. He is an enthusiastic revolutionary who unites barbaric primitiveness with a certain amount of refinement. Prokof'ev is also one of the few Bolshevik composers who has made a name in Western Europe; his opera, *The Love for the Three Oranges*, has been performed in several French and German theatres. In Russia a ballet, *The Tale of the Rogue who Outwitted Three Other Rogues*, made the greatest sensation. In it " the grotesque wild rhythms and a savagery which often recalls the colour effects of mountebanks' posters " prevail. The various pictures of the ballet are connected by entr'acte music, so that the orchestra never stops for a single moment during the evening. These *intermezzi* represent a sort of symphonic episodes, in which the chief motives of the preceding and following scenes are jumbled together in a kind of kaleidoscopic effect.

Of course, the theatres tried to find a new sort of setting for the new music. The State Opera House of Moscow studied *Carmen* and *Lohengrin* according to the most modern principles, adjusted the stage picture as far as possible to the music, and by means of lighting effects and all sorts of colour effects tried to produce a relation between the music and the setting. Many other theatres also attempted to perform old and new operas as well as ballets in a form which retained as few traditional elements as possible, and which aimed at revolutionizing not only the staging but also the music.

The ballet and the pantomime have long played a particularly important part in Russia, and thus it is not surprising that particular

efforts were made to revolutionize and renovate these old forms. In contrast to the strictly conservative art of the former Imperial Ballet, a new proletarian dance culture was called to life, but it increasingly degenerated into acrobatics. Other schools are endeavouring to adapt movement to music as exactly as possible, but, in view of the desultory and episodic character of modern composition, this leads to complete unsteadiness of gesture and pantomimic action. Other choreographists, again, are experimenting in mechanizing the ballet too, and symbolizing in dance the movements of motors, levers, and fly-wheels.

Forregger has developed this tendency to its farthest consequences and has transformed dancing into a mere expression of the mechanical. This " machine dancing " immediately became very famous, and was stamped as a lofty work of the revolutionary proletarian art of motion.

Forregger and his disciples endeavoured to resolve the regularity of the machine into rhythmic movement; the result of these attempts sometimes recalled religious ritual: it was as if priests and priestesses were celebrating in dance the new God of the Machine. Their bodies became correctly constructed appliances, they no longer moved, they " functioned." What Forregger accomplishes is a cinematics of the living organism, an analysis in dance of the human mechanism, worked out in exhaustive physiological, mechanical, and psychotechnical studies. The new dancing, in Forregger's sense, tries to express the most general movements of the human organism, rhythm no longer individual but universal. All the gestures are, therefore, as far as possible transformed into partial functions of a total movement, and strictly geometrized. The spectator is intended to recognize in the activity of each single group of muscles a motor reflex within the frame of the whole great stage machine. Dancing is intended to be nothing but a vivid demonstration of the adequate organization of the human machine.

4

The same idea also ruled the true proletarian music; it, too, emphasized the rhythms which corresponded to the universal and impersonal elements of humanity. The new music had to embrace all the noises of the mechanical age, the rhythm of the machine, the din of the great city and the factory, the whirring of driving-belts, the clattering of motors, and the shrill notes of motor-horns.

Therefore, the Bolshevists very soon proceeded to construct special noise instruments, to form noise orchestras, to give the public a " real new music " instead of the usual old bourgeois individualistic " patchwork," and in this way to prepare the collective soul for the

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revelation of the holiest. They imitated all conceivable sounds from industry and technology and united them in peculiar fugues, in which a whole world of noise deafened the ear. In increasingly extended forms the new " machine music " made itself felt, and soon noise symphonies, noise operas, and noise festive performances were composed.

Performances of this kind were carried out with a seriousness and a devotion which resemble religious mysteries. A particularly fanatical sect of " machine worshippers," the so-called " engineerists," held in the festive hall of the Moscow Trade Union Palace noise orgies which show better than anything else the banal absurdity of all these attempts. The first public divine service of these " machine worshippers " began with a noise orchestra composed of a crowd of motors, turbines, sirens, hooters, and similar instruments of din; the choir master stood on a balustrade and " conducted " the din with the aid of a complicated signalling apparatus. After the noise overture had raged long enough to deafen the audience completely, the real passion play began. Of course, it had no wings or stage and was performed in the hall in the midst of the crowd. Reckless gymnastics were zealously performed with choppy movements mechanized as far as possible, on all kinds of gymnastic apparatus, under, in, on, between, before, and beside the various machine structures. It appeared that quite uncommon things were happening in this gesture-speech to be understood only by the initiated, for individual spectators immediately fell into a state of supreme excitement and emotion; they assured everybody that this was a passion play which represented the sacrifice of the lower individual man on the altar of the mechanized and desouled collectivity.

While the noise orchestra roughly corresponded to the period of economic militant communism, " electrification " and the " perfecting of archaic technology " corresponded to the reconstruction in music, and, as the supreme result of these two factors, the " symphony for factory whistles." The basic idea of this new and really original artistic form, which henceforward was used by preference at all great communist festivals, was due to the untiring revolutionary poets, Gastev and Maiakovski. They pointed out that proletarian music should no longer be confined to one narrow room, but that its audience should be the population of a whole district. The factory whistle was, in their opinion, best adapted to be the new and predominant orchestral instrument, for its tone could be heard by whole quarters and remind the proletariat of its real home, the factory. It was not long before theoretical discussions were put into practice; as early as 1918 experiments with factory whistle symphonies of this kind were tried in Petersburg and later in Nizhni-Novgorod. But

the first performance on a large scale took place in Baku on 7th November 1922. The foghorns of the whole Caspian Fleet, all the factory sirens, two batteries of artillery, several infantry regiments, a machine-gun section, real hydroplanes, and finally choirs in which all the spectators joined, took part in this performance. The festival is said to have been very impressive; it is not surprising that this "music" could be heard far beyond the walls of the town of Baku.

In Moscow, too, there have been repeated experiments with factory whistle symphonies, but with no very happy results. On the one hand, the capacity of modulation in the instruments used was not very great, and, on the other hand, the "compositions" performed were much too complicated. Although the "conductors" posted on high towers, regulated by waving flags the intervention of the various sirens and steam-whistles, which were at considerable distances from each other, it proved impossible to attain a uniform, acoustic impression. The distortions were so great that the public could not even recognize the well-known and familiar "Internationale."

In spite of this failure, however, the idea itself has not been given up, and stubborn and continuous study is still being devoted to improving the capacity for modulation and the purity of tone of the "monumental instruments," as well as the exactness of the common direction, for it is still hoped to arrive by this means at a "monumental proletarian music."

Chapter X

THE REVOLUTIONIZING OF EVERYDAY LIFE

I

IMMENSE though the consequences of the Revolution and the new dominion may have been for culture in general, with the new " superstructure " only a small part of the task which the Bolsheviks had set themselves was accomplished. For that task included not only a fundamental alteration of artistic feeling, of eye, ear, and taste, but also the revolutionizing of man in his everyday life, his manners and customs, his faith; all his feelings and thoughts had to be adapted to the fact that henceforward a new type of man was to populate Russia.

This was the aim of innumerable decrees and orders of the Soviet authorities; there was hardly a single detail of public or private life in which the Bolsheviks did not drastically interfere.

Certainly the preachers of revolutionary innovations were here faced with a gigantic problem: nowhere could it be harder for them to prove the rightness of their principles by practical application. It had been comparatively easy to turn all ideas topsy-turvy in the realm of art and scientific education, that is in intellectual spheres, which had always taken a subordinate place in Russia; there supervision could to a certain extent be dispensed with, because the innovators were not confronted with deeply rooted traditions; but the revolutionizing of daily life, the " remoulding of the whole man " was a much more difficult problem. For here every innovation was under the inspection of day to day life, and every theory was at once faced with a pitilessly severe test of its practicability.

Since then it was a question of the most radical of all changes, of the fundamental reform of the ordinary daily life of centuries, the insuperable barriers which reality and tradition can raise against all romantic experiments made themselves apparent immediately. It was at once clear that the Russian, however pliable and changeable he had hitherto appeared, was nevertheless all too strongly wedded to his inherited manners and customs. Although before this he might sometimes have had doubts of the existence of God, and shown himself accessible to rationalistic influences, he was nevertheless

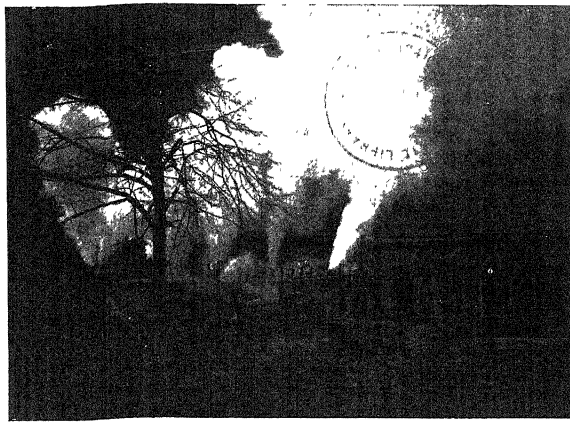
indissolubly bound to his faith by the three great solemn moments of his life, by the festive customs connected with birth, marriage, and death. The mystical splendour of these religious rites was as closely bound up with the emotional life of the Russian as the sacramental inspirations of the high offices, masses, and processions which brought colour, joy, and radiance into his otherwise monotonous existence. He was deeply rooted in these customs, and the first task of the Bolsheviks was bound to be the breaking of all these old bonds. Not till this was done could they dream of realizing their much desired scheme of the mechanized man.

From the very first, therefore, the struggle of the Soviet Government was mainly directed against these old, deeply rooted notions of divine consecration; in the first period of universal chaotic annihilation they thought that here, too, they could succeed simply by means of armed " radical destruction." In the first years of the Revolution the war against the Church was carried on ruthlessly, and attempts were made in innumerable mass meetings to enlighten the populace on the evil and absurdity of all faith in the Church. At that time vandalist methods were resorted to, some churches were deprived altogether of their original purpose, and attempts were made to transform them into " new useful rooms." The cathedrals in some provincial districts were used by the local executive as meeting houses for atheists, as communist party offices, enlightenment museums or anti-religious theatres. Some churches were even turned into carpenters' or plumbers' workshops, and Zosnovski relates with pride that a former orthodox monastery in the Tikhon Desert had been transformed into a stud farm. All external signs of faith, such as the cross on the cupola, the pictures of saints, and similar emblems were replaced by Soviet stars, sickles, and hammers, as well as by red flags; the bells were sold as old iron and agricultural machines made from the proceeds; instead of the chiming of bells, factory whistles sounded. Between the characteristic bulb-shaped domes of the churches wireless aerials and wire nets for high tension plant were stretched, which was hailed by the communist Press as a " happy sign of the adaptation of the Russian people to the modern technical spirit."

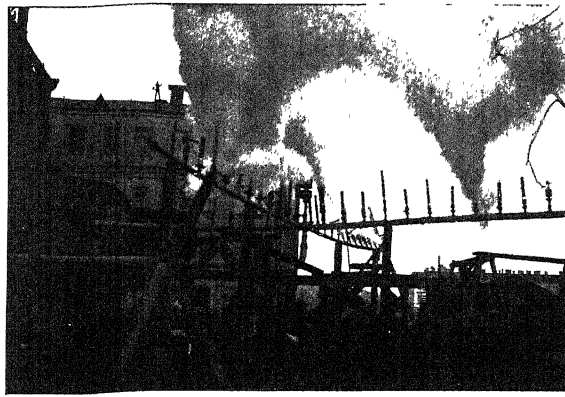
For long, faith in saints and relics of saints had played a great part in Russia. In order to attack this form of superstitious piety with the greatest possible vigour, the bodies of the great saints, which for centuries had been the object of continual pilgrimages to the monasteries of Kiev and Moscow, were torn from their tombs amid the cheers of communist street arabs, and publicly exhibited in the newly established Museum of National Hygiene. Doctors and agitators were stationed by the almost carbonized and mummified bodies of the saints to give scientific lectures to the spectators on the

CONCERT OF FACTORY SIRENS AND STEAM WHISTLES

The conductor stands on the roof of the tallest house and conducts by means of flags



CONCERT OF FACTORY SIRENS AND STEAM WHISTLES



IN ORDER TO BRING MUSIC INTO THE SERVICE OF THE COLLECTIVITY AND TO MAKE IT AUDIBLE TO THE MILLIONS SIMULTANEOUSLY, THE OLD MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS WERE REPLACED BY AN ORCHESTRA OF FACTORY SIRENS " IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TIMES "

reason why these bodies had not putrefied. " If a dead body is placed in a dry airy space," they explained to the gaping crowd, " the bacteria of decay cannot develop, decomposition is arrested, and the corpse dries up. If a mummy of this kind falls into the hands of the priests, it is immediately declared to be the relics of a saint. If a dried body of this kind is not forthcoming naturally, then you need only sufficient skill, a few pounds of cotton wool, and the skull of any dead person you like, and in a trice you can manufacture relics."

In order to make this propaganda against belief in miracles still more effective, a mummified body of a counterfeiter, which had been found, was exhibited by the side of the dried remains of the saints; this body had been discovered some time before in a well ventilated room in Moscow, where it had lain for nine months. In this case the propagandists of Bolshevik enlightenment explained that by the logic of the Church this dead counterfeiter should also be canonized, if the preservation of his body was only to be explained by divine influence. Alongside the mummies of three orthodox martyrs, Antonius, Johannes, and Eustachius, who lost their lives in 1344 in defence of the true faith, two little boxes were exhibited which contained the excellently preserved remains of a frog and a rat; both animals had been caught in a ventilator and dried by the current of air. In the same section of the museum, some old Egyptian mummies were also on view; all these examples of corpses which had escaped decomposition furnished additional proof that faith in miracles was entirely ridiculous, here as everywhere else. To have kept the people in subjection to these erroneous doctrines was the chief criminal offence of the Church and its ministers.

2

This war against relics formed only a part of the great militant propaganda against religion, which the Bolsheviks endeavoured to carry on by means of so-called " enlightenment cadres " organized like military units. Attempts were made by means of innumerable meetings and lectures to exercise a rationalistic influence on the masses; in the schools religious instruction was replaced by special anti-religious teaching, and everything was staked on uniting communist youth in a specifically free-thinking young people's organization, the " Komsomol " Association, which spread all over Russia. Broadsheets were distributed in the street, in which materialist criticism of the theory of knowledge was opposed to " religious superstition," and special periodicals were founded to spread anti-religious propaganda, which appeared under challenging titles such as *Bezbozhnik* (*the Godless*).

The Press in general was one of the most important weapons of

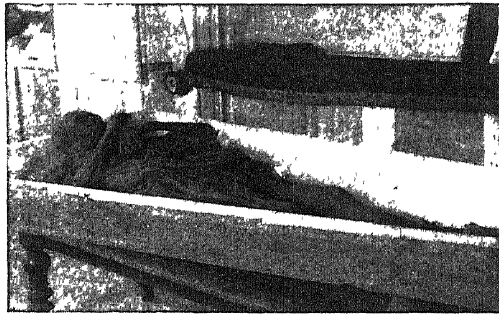
propaganda of the Bolsheviks in their fight against the old religious ideas, and in support of their new materialistic notions. But here, too, appeared that gulf between desire and ability which is seen in almost all the undertakings of the Russian authorities: an enormous number of anti-religious newspapers and periodicals were founded, but both the necessary technical apparatus for printing these works correctly and an adequate staff of capable and expert editors were lacking. Thus, throughout the Russian Press a state of affairs developed which Trotski criticizes most severely: "Carelessness in the make-up of the pages and the indistinctness of the printing make reading difficult even for a practised reader, and much more so for a semi-illiterate one. Newspapers which are intended to be sold among the masses are very badly printed; the difference between copies is enormous, one is quite legible, another only half decipherable. Therefore, buying a newspaper is something like taking a ticket in a lottery. . . . It must be plainly stated that the technique of our newspapers is a disgrace to us. Poor as we are, we always succeed in spoiling a quarter or a half of a sheet of newspaper by smearing it with printers' ink. Such a paper produces in the reader at the least irritation, fatigue and apathy, if not gnashing of teeth and contempt for the people who permit such a mockery of the public. Anyone may write the articles, anyone may set them up, anyone may print them—and the result is that the reader has to decipher each line word for word with the help of his finger!"

The same is true of the innumerable books and brochures designed to promote the fight against religion; they, too, are badly printed and badly written and therefore enjoy no particular popularity among the public. Trotski had a questionnaire issued to a number of labour leaders and agitators in order to collect practical experience in various spheres of Bolshevik agitation. Among the interesting information received in answer to this, are reports on the literary interests, desires, and complaints of the workers, which show how little response the anti-religious literature has met with: "The number of books," states one such report, "is everywhere small: the volumes we have in the libraries are printed on bad paper, unbound, and inferior from the point of view of printing." "Interest is taken in the brochures," is the opinion of another labour leader, "in which everything is composed in the simplest manner, short and easy to understand, and printed in large letters. But the libraries overflow with everything you could wish for, except books suitable for the workers." "The official trade union publications," another worker bluntly declares, "are as difficult to read as it is to swallow bones. We are forced to circulate them artificially by all kinds of tricks and ruses."

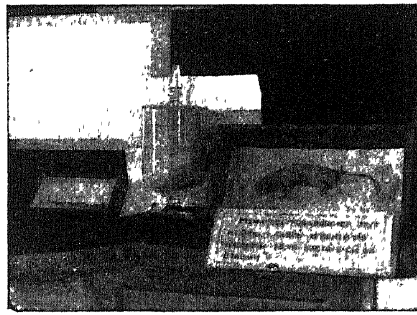
Thus, on account of its technical and other deficiencies, anti-

ANTI-RELIGIOUS PROPAGANDA

The mummified corpse of a counterfeiter has remained as well preserved as a saint's



THE MUMMY OF A CANONISED SAINT
FROM THE FAMOUS MONASTERY OF KIEV



NEXT TO IT A MUMMIFIED RAT AND
A MUMMIFIED FROG, WHICH BOTH
FELL INTO A VENTILATION SHAFT
AND WERE PRESERVED BY THE
STREAM OF AIR

THE FORMER PETROGRAD PRIVATE CHAPEL "TROITSKOE PODVORE" DURING ITS DEMOLITION BY ANTI-RELIGIOUS "KOMSOMOL" CADRES

THE CHURCH OF THE ARCHBISHOP'S PALACE IN KAZAN WAS TRANSFORMED BY THE BOLSHEVIKS INTO A CARPENTER'S SHOP IN ORDER TO SHOW THAT HANDICRAFT IS HIGHER THAN RELIGION

FINANCIAL DISCUSSIONS AMONG THE LEADERS OF THE CHILDREN'S REPUBLIC
(Drawing by M. Morskii)

"THE SMALLEST NEP-PEOPLE"
Street boys sell cigarettes, trouser buttons and note books
(Drawing by M. Morskii)

religious propaganda by means of newspapers and books made no particular headway: but, far from being deterred by this, the Bolsheviks intensified their activity more and more, for the very obstinate opposition they met with on this point proved the importance of the task.

Just as in earlier times the orthodox religion was pursued with true Russian fanaticism, the " non-existence of God " was now proclaimed with blind fury; it was not long before anti-religiousness also found prophets as ecstatic as those the orthodox faith had had; people appeared who preached unfaith lightheartedly and with uncommonly little depth of knowledge. These new prophets are truly among the most peculiar figures in present-day Russia, which is by no means badly off for oddities. They are mostly peasants' sons, who grew up in their home village in the spiritual narrowness of mediaeval superstition, but were afterwards driven to Western Europe or America by some external circumstance or other. There, a young man of this kind could easily learn a suffocating mass of new things, and arrive at the knowledge that his traditional faith cannot stand against the realities of the world. But without any fundamental grasp whatever of these new impressions, and being unable to think them out, many of these naïve creatures simply abandoned themselves to the doctrines of a very shallow materialistic enlightenment, in order to be able to champion their new convictions in their home district as soon as they came back. They feel themselves in this to be, as it were, missionaries of Western progress, and they exert themselves to make their half-digested science accessible to their countrymen who have remained at home. The " apostolic addresses " and " pastoral letters " of these atheist apostles of course swarm, as a rule, with the most nonsensical things, misunderstood technical expressions, foreign words wrongly used, and the most banal arguments against the existence of God. They mostly make the old experiment of challenging God in blasphemous speeches, and then mocking his omnipotence if a flash of lightning does not immediately restore the insulted honour of the Lord.

One of these missionaries of the new unfaith was formerly a sailor, and, in this capacity, made long and adventurous journeys; now he is trying to introduce all sorts of improvements in his home town, and to free his countrymen " from the besotting influence of religion." For this purpose, he usually stations himself at the entrance to a church, forcibly prevents the faithful from listening to divine service, and, in order to " enlighten them," reads to them disconnected passages from the Gospel of the modern man, the encyclopaedia, say the extract on the isosceles triangle or on similar triangles. Chance put him into possession of this work of reference in twenty volumes, and it became for him the book of books, the

epitome of the new truth, which he preaches to everybody, whether they will or not. And, in fact, he has succeeded, with his dogma of the isosceles triangle, in winning quite a number of adherents, previously true sons of the orthodox Church, who now regard him as a kind of new saint.

But the " enlightenment movement " was not confined merely to the activity of voluntary apostles; it could call on the services of a regular organization, which had special educational institutions at its disposal. With the support of the authorities, " Komsomol " clubs were established all over the country, in which the members, especially the young ones, were inoculated with materialistic philosophy by anti-religious teachers and preachers. In many places " natural science meetings " were instituted for workers, peasants, and red soldiers; at these, the origin of man, the inception of the idea of God, and the real meaning of Church festivals, were discussed in an anti-religious spirit. These debates were intended to stop people going to church and to inspire them with interest in materialistic science.

3

However, the results of this violent anti-religious propaganda among the populace were comparatively slight. The Russian peasant or worker was perhaps quite willing to listen to incomprehensible theoretical arguments on the " non-existence of God " with some interest, but he continued to cherish in his heart his loyalty to the faith of his fathers. The spell of Church ceremonies and century-old tradition proved stronger than propositions about the " isosceles triangle " and other wise things of the kind. Thus it was not long before the Government and the promoters of the whole enlightenment movement recognized that decisive success was not to be attained in this way. Therefore, they looked about for more effective methods, and decided to go to work differently in their attempts to get at the masses somehow. They proceeded to create an " atheistical substitute for the theatrical pomp of the orthodox Church." It was Trotski who first recognized the necessity of the theatrical element in anti-religious propaganda, and who continually drew attention to the great importance of distraction and entertainment in winning over the masses, because there is in man from youth to extreme old age a need for the theatrical and for some kind of unusual and unaccustomed beauty. Most men went to church not only from religious motives, but also because they were attracted by the glittering lights, the pictures, the statues, and the music, that is, by aesthetic enjoyment, which they could find neither in the factory,

GROUP FROM A " PROCESSION OF THE GODLESS "

Members of the Komsomol movement, dressed up as Gods, mock at praying and religious ceremonies in order to amuse street boys

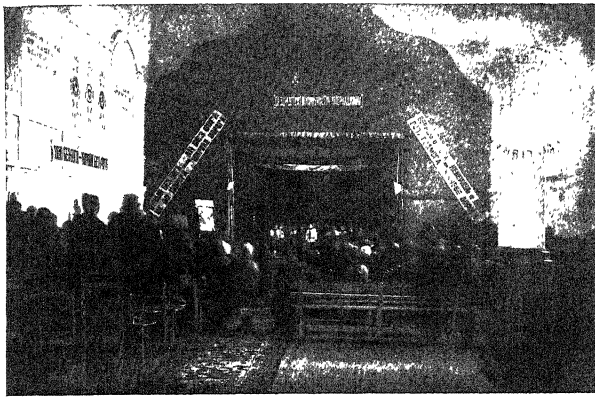
THE " RED MASS " IN A PROCESSION OF THE " GODLESS "

A SCENE FROM THE CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL OF THE " GODLESS "

The mock prayer by the priest is taken up by a clown

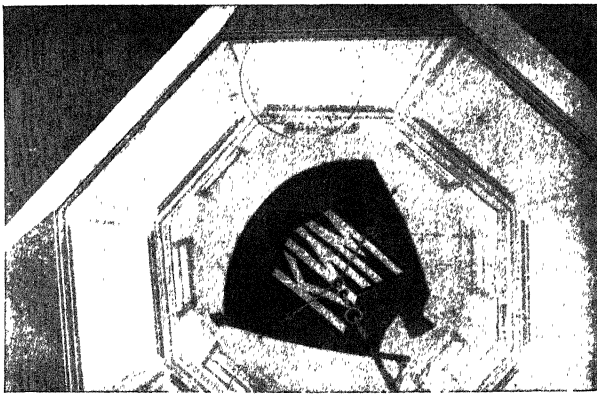
GROUP FROM A MOCKERY PROCESSION

The " red priest " sings to church tunes obscene songs in derision of the saints. Instead of the cross, Soviet stars, and instead of the orthodox symbols, the sickle and the hammer are carried



THE PRIVATE CHAPEL OF THE "TROITSKOE PODVORE" (CHURCH OF THE TRINITY) TRANSFORMED INTO AN ATHEISTS' CLUB

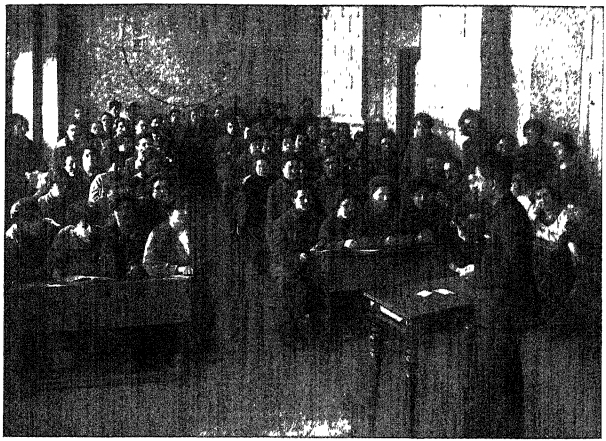
Where the altar formerly was, there is now a stage for anti-religious plays In place of the ikons, caricatures of the saints or portraits of Communist leaders. The walls are covered with Communist or anti-religious mottoes



THE CUPOLA OF A LENINGRAD CHURCH

The picture of the Holy Ghost is covered by a painted red flag with the inscription "K.I.M." (Communist International of Youth)

CORNER OF THE ANTI-RELIGIOUS SCHOOL FOR YOUTH IN MOSCOW



THE KOMSOMOL SCHOOL

Lecture on the Non-existence of God

their homes, nor the streets. The peasant, in particular, is bound to the Church by external splendour, and anti-religious propaganda had hitherto been unable to point to any noteworthy success mainly because its methods were entirely sober and reasonable.

At first the Bolshevists believed that they had found the desired substitute for Church ceremonies in theatrical performances making mock of the orthodox rites. Festivals were instituted which were parallel to the former Church institutions, but "with the signs reversed." Thus, in the towns, at Christmas, Easter, or Whitsuntide, anti-religious Christmas, Easter, or Whitsun festivals were held in front of the churches. On one such occasion, for example, the "priest" appeared in vestments which were a caricature of the real priestly garments, and was, therefore, supposed to be amusing to the godless community. "Red devotions" and a "red mass" were held, both of which ridiculed the orthodox Church rites. Finally, the choir sang well-known old hymns, the altered words of which made mock of Christ, the Mother of God, and the saints in a filthy manner. Sometimes the tune itself was dragged in the mud by the unexpected introduction of a few bars of a revolutionary song or even an obscene street ballad. For pictures of the saints at such representations they used either caricatures of divine persons or the portraits of communist leaders. Similar pictures and painted banners were carried in front of the street processions of atheist "ministrants," and they also carried great puppets representing God the Father, Christ, Buddha, and Allah. At the close of a "mockery procession" of this kind, these puppets, at a word of command from the "priest" are reviled, thrashed, torn to pieces, or publicly burned by street boys. Many of these mockery processions developed into great festive performances, the scenario of which was worked out by the most famous poets, painters, and producers. Among such performances may be mentioned the "Godless Mystery of the Birth of Komsomol (the Godless)" and the satirical mystery, "The Non-Immaculate Conception," from the pen of Tret'iakov.

Particular attention was devoted to anti-religious propaganda in the rural districts. Even in the remotest villages of the great Empire "cells" were set up, "nunciatures" of the Central Atheistic Association at Moscow, whose task it was to direct the arrangement of anti-religious festivities with special regard to rural peculiarities. As a substitute for the Christmas gaieties usual among the peasants, soirées were arranged with programmes, which, though giving materialistic instruction, were also entertainments. Plays, round dances, and other peasant amusements were used in the campaign against religion: recitations were given of the fables of the national poet, Dem'ian Bednyi, which are very popular in the country, and which inveigh against the Church and the old prejudices in a form

readily understood and easily rendered. These fables generally show how the priests, under cover of faith, take the goods and chattels of the poor peasants, give themselves up to drink, and are ignorant and corrupt, while the Bolsheviks, on the other hand, are freeing the people from the clutches of their tormentors and raising them to new and higher knowledge.

Similar recitations and lectures are also arranged for the Easter festival, always with the object of drawing the attention of the rural young people to the pagan origin of the Easter festival, and to the lack of scientific proof of the existence of Christ. Quite in the manner of the old national festivals and with the same tunes, mocking songs against the priesthood are sung, and ironical plays performed. A piece of this kind by Dem'ian Bednyi shows how people drink at Easter, romp together, squander money, and then fall into each other's arms again with the joyful cry " Christ is risen," only to give themselves up once again to all the vices. But the moment a communist appears and makes plain to the people the absurdity of this life, they joyfully adhere to his doctrine.

Soon an advance was made from such occasional arrangements, to creating permanent and settled homes for the anti-religious propaganda; the first to arise was the Moscow theatre, " The Atheist." Here plays with a tendency hostile to faith were performed every evening for the workers and the soldiers of the Red Army, and soon the communist Press demanded that similar theatres should be erected in all the provinces of the Empire.

4

But, in spite of these many lavish attempts to undermine the authority of the Church among the people, the results were, as before, entirely inadequate. Even the crazy arrangements of that " theatrical " period of struggle could not satisfy the masses and provide a suitable substitute for their craving for the ceremonies of the orthodox Church. Nothing positive had been created which could be set against the positive achievements of the Church; the purely negative mockery and derision repelled people rather than attracted them, and even the few who found pleasure in such tasteless performances remained faithful to the old traditions in their own family festivals.

Baptism, marriage, and burial continued to be carried on in the immemorial, traditional way, for ceremony is as fundamental a need in the life of the Russian as eating and drinking; it is ineradicable and unconquerably strong. Therefore, if an infant had to be baptized, the last respects paid to the dead, or a blessing called down on the head of a loved one, even the man who that very day had

"THE MASS ON THE MARCH"

(Radek, Painting by Kupka)

CARICATURE FROM THE ATHEISTIC JOURNAL "BEZBOZHNIK"

THE COMMITTEE OF THE " ALL RUSSIAN CONFERENCE OF SCIENTIFIC WORKERS AND SCHOLARS "

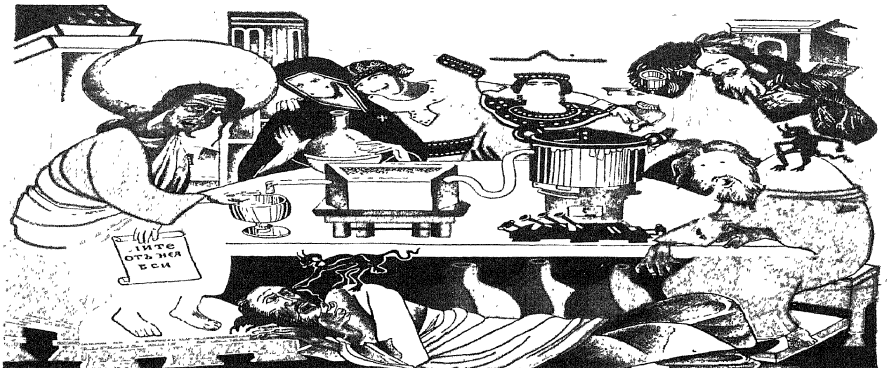
PAGE FROM " BEZBOZHNIK "

The detrimental effect of Orthodox Religion on Agriculture
(Drawn by Cheremokhin)

COVER OF "BEZBOZHNIK," THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE "ATHEISTS"

On the steps of Heaven, an angel, a former Komsomol member, reads the last number of "Bezbozhnik" to the three Gods of Judaism, Christendom and Mohammedanism

PROFESSOR A. K. TIMIRIAZEV, THE CREATOR OF THE MATERIALISTIC SOVIET PHILOSOPHY, GIVES A COURSE OF LECTURES ON PHYSICS REVISED ACCORDING TO MARX



УДО В КАНЕ ГАЛИЛЕЙСКОЙ ИЛИ ОТКУДА ПОШЛА САМОГОНКА

(Евангелие от Иоанна Гл II, стихи 1–10)

Во дни оны отложив попечению житейское
Пошел Иисус на свадьбу в Кану Галилейскую(Іоан II 1).
Туда же и мастер винный,
Ибо как было отвержение каянно,
Поскольку на оные свадьбы охоть велика,
Вино на оных сомрали все до последнего глотка)
И рече господь Слушайте людие,
Капча не вы однако ритовея!
Ну, и народ долому и дак в этой стороне!
Вина нет! Да его еще по Сеньгогонке
Дававтя скорей сюда бочку воды
И дело чистое сляю
В одну минуту вино будет готово,
Сейчас сотворю чудо великое и славу,
Сейчас сотворю вам большое чудо,
Сие бо есть не обман и не очковтя-
У меня как раз с особою завязка.

И возрили к нему услыши нас господи и спаяи
Канон самый лучший рецепт каянии
И нашли господь завязку в онфейкон – по милости
своей великая

И стал разводить, ее доливая водицей
„Се сотворю начаток знамением Иисус — и яви свою
славу" (II II, 2)

И налоэя каянюю всю орану
И уверовали в него ученики его (II II 2), яко
Сотворил он чудо великое
Ибо „он стольна" в тот день все были пьяны
И сам „архитоклиния т) дно на вкуси
Вина бывшего от воды" (II II, 9),
Глаза стоят и на двоится „на туды ни сюды"
Давай наливай рецепт самогонки!

*) Рекомендуется.

PAGE FROM " BEZBOZHNIK "

The " Marriage of Cana " in anti-religious style

taken part in one of these mockeries, turned again to the old Church, which alone had the power of grace, and said his prayers in company with the rest of the devout.

It became increasingly clear that the war against the old faith could not be successfully waged by means of mere negations, although, at Trotski's instigation, an attempt had been made to enliven anti-religious propaganda by instructive cinematograph performances. Trotski thought that this method was admirably adapted to arouse the interest of the masses, because it could offer something new all the time. But in spite of all these efforts, and in spite of the considerable sums spent on anti-religious propaganda, the old customs soon found their way again into daily life, and the fight seemed really hopeless. Again, it was Trotski who gave voice to the necessity of opposing the old manners and customs with equally effective new forms of life, which should not be limited to mere negation of the past, but should produce something of positive value.

They began by substituting new festivals, new processions, and new symbols for the orthodox festivals, processions, and the rites and symbols of the divine service. They started by discovering " red substitutes " for the Church ceremonies of baptism, marriage, and burial, for these were, as has already been mentioned, the religious rites which seemed most closely bound up with the life of the masses. They could no longer suffer the new-born proletarian to receive the name of one of the old calendar saints, who had once and for all been deprived of all right to existence. They must aim at bringing the names of the children, who were one day to wield world-wide communist dominion, into harmony with the ideology of communism. So an attempt was made to fabricate baptismal names which could be more or less ceremoniously bestowed at the red rites, names which should be taken from the life and ideas of present-day revolutionary Russia. The Bolshevik infant in swaddling clothes receives, for example, if it is a girl, the name " Octobrina " in memory of the October Revolution, or " Konstitutsia," or " Revolutsia." If the infant is a boy then he is called " Chervonets " perhaps, from the name of the Russian unit of currency, which is exactly as if an enthusiastic German were to baptize his son " Rentenmark." Other boys' names are " Spartac," " Textile," or " Rem," the last being one of the contractions so popular in Russia and standing for the phrase " revolutionary electrification." Other common baptismal names are " Vladelina," formed from a combination of Lenin's Christian name and surname, " Stiag Plamenny," which means " banner of flame." " Fevralina " alludes to the February Revolution, " Idea " expresses simply thought—naturally, revolutionary thought—" Communa " recalls the Commune, while " Maina " is

intended to celebrate the May Day festival. Later, it frequently happened that even the choice of name for a new-born infant became a " collective business." A worker to whom a son has been born summons the works council of the factory; they elect a chairman, vote on the future name of the child, draft minutes, sign them, and celebrate the event with tea and a feast.

The external ceremonies of a " red baptism " are naturally entirely different from those of the Church. They take place usually in one of the Party headquarters, and the secretary who conducts the service fills the office of priest, while the works council of the factory in which the father is employed supplies the godparents. A further attempt is made to emphasize the collective element at baptisms by conducting the ceremony for several infants at once. The hall is festively decked with red, and the ceremony begins with a sort of comic works council meeting, and a choir of workers on the platform strike up the " International." Then a bell sounds, and, amid the breathless stillness of the audience, the curtain rises on a stage, on which the parents with their infants are sitting round a table with a red cover. A speaker at once appears and explains the meaning of the festival to those present, and gives the parents a number of revolutionary names to choose from. Next, the fathers rise in turn, express their wishes, and make a solemn promise to the gathering to try to bring up their children in the spirit of the new revolutionary Russia. Minutes are taken and signed, and a copy presented to each married couple. This is followed by general congratulations and many festive speeches. The approximate wording of the baptismal certificate is as follows: " We the undersigned herewith attest that a new citizeness has been received into the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics . . . (here follows baptismal name and surname). By giving you your name in honour of . . . (here follows the meaning of the name), we greet you as a future worker and founder of the communist social order. May the ideals of communism henceforth form the content of your life as long as you live! May you be one of those who will bring the great cause of the proletariat to its goal! You shall march under the red flag! Long live the new revolutionary citizeness! "

5

Trotski proposed that the beginning of a young man's apprenticeship should also be treated as a festival, and celebrated with new observances, because this was an extraordinarily important event, since it was closely bound up with the choice of an occupation. " It would be fitting," in Trotski's opinion, " if the trade unions tried to do something here. For there is no doubt that the trade

ASIATIC WOMEN LISTENING THOUGHTFULLY AT A COMMUNIST MEETING

CARICATURE FROM THE ATHEISTIC JOURNAL " BEZBOZHNIK "

unions will take a prominent place in the creation and organization of new forms of life. The guilds of the Middle Ages attained greatness just because they embraced every aspect of the life of the apprentice, the journeyman, and the master. They welcomed the infant on his first day of life, accompanied him to the doors of adolescence, followed him to church when he married, and buried him when his course of life was ended. The guilds were not merely associations of handicraftsmen; they were a method of organization of life, its manners and customs. The development of our trade union organizations may well take the same direction, of course with this important difference, that the new life, in contrast to that of the Middle Ages, will be free from any connection with the Church and its superstitions. We shall endeavour to utilize every achievement of science and technology to enrich and relieve our existence." In the answers to Trotski's above-mentioned questionnaire, a similar plan is to be found, in which a proposal is made for a " production confirmation " for young people. Up to the present, this has remained a proposal and a subject for theoretical discussions, and no such observance has been adopted.

It was considerably more difficult to find an adequate substitute for the traditional forms of marriage, for the meaning of this act was now poles apart from the idea which underlay the corresponding Church ceremony. The union of two free communists was no longer intended to signify an irksome tie which welded the pair for life like two prisoners; it was to be an institution which could be dissolved at any time and represented merely the registration of a social contract.

By existing Russian law, a marriage means nothing more than an announcement of the fact to the competent police authorities, while a divorce is treated almost like a traveller's notice of his intention to start on a journey. If a couple decide to get married, they have nothing to do but to sign a document, attested by two witnesses, showing that neither of the parties is already married. Then the registrar with no further formality declares that the couple are henceforward to be regarded as joined in matrimony. But however little opportunity for the display of splendour and festivity this colourless official business offered, the authorities soon contrived to give it a more friendly spirit by introducing dances and a splendid banquet. These festivities are now always arranged in connection with a marriage ceremony; often, indeed, the visit to the police authorities is dispensed with as some couples regard it as an unnecessary and irksome formality.

Finally, it seemed especially important to invent suitable new ceremonies for the burial of the dead, for the idea of burying a loved one without every ceremony was bound to seem perfectly ridiculous

to a Russian. The importance of a properly splendid funeral procession even to class conscious proletarians may be seen from the fact that the father of a well-known "Komsomolets," that is, a denier of God, on his son's death, arranged crosses round the corpse, sent for the priest, and replied to the objections of the Party comrades by asking what they could offer to honour his dead son in place of the Church ceremony. On the "Komsomoltsy" replying that they had intended to bear the body to the grave to the accompaniment of music, the father changed round and declared contentedly that everything would be all right if there was to be music at the funeral. In deference to this trait of the national character, a band forms the chief part of the "red obsequies," which are also made more splendid by a mass of red flags and a procession of workers' unions. The highest honour that can be paid to the dead is the closing of one or more factories, and the participation of the workers in a body in the funeral ceremonies.

In all branches of public life the Soviet authorities aim at introducing the greatest possible amount of variety, especially into the monotonous life of the peasantry, true to the view expressed by Dostoevski that boredom is an aristocratic, and, therefore, a counter-revolutionary feeling. By the introduction of the eight-hour day the worker suddenly had more leisure, and, therefore, more opportunity of abandoning himself to drink or idleness. So an endeavour was made to think out new festive occasions and to amuse and distract the masses in their free time. In order to promote the "spirit of progress" as much as possible, extensive use was made at such festivals of cinematographs, gramophones, and loud speakers, in the hope that the technical superiority of these things would drive the Church festivals from the field, or at least force them into the background.

Trotski made the undoubtedly valuable suggestion that the State dram shops, which were spread over the whole Empire during the time of the tsars, should be turned into State cinemas. This would, on the one hand, provide the Government with an important source of revenue, and, on the other hand, give the people the chance of entertainment and instruction. In Trotski's opinion, the desire for gaiety, amusement, and entertainment is a just demand of human nature, and it is, therefore, the duty of the State to meet this need and direct it into the right paths. There is here a possibility of making pleasure an instrument of education and of at once entertaining and instructing the masses without obtrusive pedagogic tutelage. The greatest possible attention should also be devoted to the promotion of sport, as this seems to be the most suitable means of giving the masses new interests, as is proved by the developments of the last century in Western Europe.

THE HEAD OF A VILLAGE COMMUNITY

THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE KIRGIS PEASANTS AT A CONGRESS

6

But not only was a bitter war waged against tradition in big things; an attempt was made to root out old customs and manners in the smallest details of daily life or to replace them by new ones. Thus, the authorities issued a number of decrees against the universal custom of celebrating birthdays, and declared this to be counter-revolutionary, because birthdays commemorated a canonized saint. The old Russian custom of calling an acquaintance or a relation by his given name and his father's name was also rejected as counter-revolutionary, because it recalled the patriarchal period, in which every Russian was treated as a member of one big family. For this reason it was important to break with the past in this respect also.

Even the old forms of greeting had to be changed; this was more difficult than it might appear, since Russian greetings are fundamentally different from those customary in Europe, not only in words, or in the ideas behind them, but also in the gestures. Where we say "thank you," for example, the Russian uses the expression "spasibo," which means something like "God protect you." On feast days the form of speech, "With the little feast day" is common, which is really an elliptical contraction of a whole sentence. The forms of greeting in the country are particularly varied and original; they are often like incantations and are uttered in a mechanical singsong voice without any appreciation whatever of their original meaning. A person coming from some distance is usually greeted with "Salt and bread"; in Siberia the form "Tea with sugar" is common, which probably is a kind of pious wish and expresses a hope that the person addressed may be in a position to afford himself the luxury of such a beverage. If a man is the guest of a friend, it is the custom for him on leaving to say farewell with the words "Your guests, my guests," by which he invites all those present to be his guests. On entering a shop, the form of greeting used is "May your trade prosper." In some remote places, forms of greeting are still retained which go back to feudal lordship, and in their variety belong to a time that has long since disappeared. Like the custom in force in Austria until recent times of giving every decently dressed man the title of "Baron," the Russian droshky driver on principle also addresses his fare as "Barin"; this custom is so strong that this term, which is the equivalent of "liege lord," even to-day is universally used in communist Russia.

But now all these traditions were to be entirely done away with. The orthodox atheist is never to use the word "spasibo," the second part of which means "God," he is simply to say "merci" instead. In the same way, an attempt is being made to find a new expression

for every traditional form of this kind, and, with this end in view, the authorities are trying to bring about an assimilation with Western European forms of courtesy.

But attention is being devoted not only to polite usages, but also to impolite; and here the efforts of the Bolsheviks should undoubtedly be welcomed. Trotski relates how the workers in a boot and shoe factory decided to prohibit insulting words and to impose fines on anyone using them. " Insulting terms," says Trotski rightly, " are an inheritance from the times of slavery and oppression; they imply a contempt for human dignity, both one's own and other people's. We should ask philologists, linguists, and students of folk lore whether any other country has such a stock of unrestrained, filthy, and revolting terms of insult as we have. So far as I know, no nation, or hardly any nation, has. In Russian invective, from the lowest up to the highest classes, there is concealed despair, bitterness, and, most of all, the feeling of hopeless servitude. But the same insults, from a superior to an inferior, in the mouth of a nobleman or a police superintendent, were an expression of class superiority, of the distinction of the slave-owner and the solidity of the foundations of society. . . . The fight against insulting words is as much a necessary condition of spiritual culture as the fight against dirt and lice is a necessary condition of material culture. . . . Our life is full of inconsistencies in its economic foundations and in its cultural forms. The same contrasts also appear in our manners. . . . In addition to these social contrasts, hoggish stupidity and lofty revolutionary endeavour, we may not infrequently remark psychological oppositions in one and the same mind, in one and the same consciousness. You have a man, an upright and loyal communist, who yet sees in women nothing but a ' crew of females ' (what a horrible word!) of whom one cannot speak seriously. Or an excellent Bolshevik will suddenly come out with an expression which makes you want to leave the room. This is due to the fact that the different areas of human consciousness are not altered and remoulded uniformly and simultaneously. ' To straighten out ' the spiritual front, that is, to remodel all the areas of consciousness on the Marxian method, is the universal formula of education and self-training, especially for our own Party, beginning with its heads. . . . The war against invective is a part of the war for purity, clearness, and beauty of speech. Speech is an instrument of thought; exactness and correctness of expression are necessary conditions for exactness and correctness of thought."

Assimilation with the West is also aimed at in another direction, where the introduction of European customs represents a considerable upheaval: the Bolsheviks are making great efforts to replace the old orthodox calendar by the reckoning which has been adopted by

the rest of the world. Previously, both State and Church in tsarist Russia employed almost exclusively the old style of dating, while the Revolution from the very beginning made the new style compulsory. It is true that all along a number of compromises have been necessary; for instance, the expression " October Revolution " is valid only by the old style; by Western reckoning, the 25th of October falls in November. But, in spite of these considerable difficulties, it has been possible, in course of time, to make the new system of dating almost universal; here the modernizing and approximation to Western conditions is undoubtedly an advance.

The partisans of the old régime, it is true, cling to the old style as a symbolic remnant of the earlier order, and they mostly observe the old calendar in their households, and in keeping family feast days. In the first years of the Revolution, this conservatism found support also in the Church, which obstinately rejected the new style, plainly from religious motives. But some time ago the modern style penetrated into those Church communities which were not inaccessible to reforms, and, for the future, festivals are to be fixed for the same dates as those adopted in Western reckoning. The so-called " Old Church " of the Patriarch Tikhon, however, as always, holds aloof from all reform, and still celebrates its festivals by the old calendar.

7

All the attempted reforms of the Bolsheviks already described seem harmless, even commonplace, compared to the changes which they have introduced in the relations of the sexes. The conception of marriage and the new laws on marriage and divorce have brought about far-reaching and revolutionary changes in the position of man and wife; in particular, the greater ease with which marriages can be dissolved has been accompanied by incalculable consequences. According to Soviet legislation, marriage is the result of a voluntary mutual agreement, and is valid only when there is complete harmony between the parties. Therefore, the marriage tie is invalid even when denounced by only one of the parties; on this point the new Russian law is fundamentally different from that of all the other countries of the world. The formalities required for the dissolution of a marriage are the simplest conceivable; if the divorce takes place by mutual consent and in the same place as that in which the marriage was concluded, then the competent registrar carries out the necessary legal formalities. But if the divorce takes place in another locality or against the will of one of the parties, then the courts are brought into the dispute. On presentation of a petition, the interested parties are summoned to a session; if they live in the same town

they are both usually present at the negotiations; but if one of the parties is living in another locality, he or she is notified merely by a summons on the notice-board of the official court-house. The judge, without regard to whether both parties are present, pronounces the decree of divorce after the lapse of a certain period; thus it is possible for people to think they are married, while in reality they have been declared to be divorced by a sentence of the existence of which they have not the least suspicion.

But while marriage in Russia has become obscure and confused by this simplification of formalities, the relations which have developed in free unions between the sexes are still more curious. The best account of these conditions is contained in an article by Madame Smidovich, which appeared in *Pravda*:

"Our young people," she says, "have certain principles in affairs of love. All these principles are governed by the belief that the nearer you approach to extreme, and, as it were, animal primitiveness, the more communistic you are. Every 'Komsomolets,' even every member of a labour faculty, whose aim is to raise the intelligence of the working classes, every student, man or girl, considers it as axiomatic that in affairs of love they should impose the least possible restraint on themselves. A second main proposition in these axioms of love is as follows: 'Every "Komsomoltsa," every "Rabfaka,"[1] every woman student, on whom the choice of one of these young men of strong principles has fallen, must obey unquestioningly.' The third point of the system, which, in practice, is always at the same time a drama, is also a principle. The figure of the doctor appears . . . this is the revolution of 'Komsomolets love'!"

Madame Smidovich quotes cases which she declares to be typical: for example, one day two sixteen-year-old fathers appeared before the amazed officials of the Foundling Hospital with a "collective child." For some years, commissions have existed which have to give their consent in individual cases to legally permitted abortions. This consent is given in cases where large families, illness, or social conditions justify interference, and also when a woman student is in her last term. Madame Smidovich also gives an account of "African Nights," which are held in the communist young people's organizations. From what she says these institutions owe much of their success to these affairs. That it is the girls who suffer from conditions of this kind is shown by the fact that of the promoters of these "African nights," seventy per cent. are young men and only thirty per cent. girls.

These conditions frequently lead directly to a terrorizing of their girl comrades by these lads. Madame Smidovich quotes the case of

[1] Woman student at a "labour faculty."

a quite young girl who refused a proposal after two attempts and was rewarded with insults. In this heavy sexual atmosphere suicides abound. Much of the blame for all this is due not only to the new theories, but also to the frightful housing conditions and the undisciplined way of living of young people. As is well known, there is no public criticism in Soviet Russia, so all the newspaper accounts of occurrences of this kind are influenced by the Government; this is the only possible explanation of the fact that you find only reproaches levelled against " disgusting bourgeois ideas," and no unprejudiced judgments on the unparalleled debauchery and its immeasurably harmful effects on the young.

Just recently Madame Alexandra Kollontai, the well-known Soviet diplomat, published an interesting book, which describes the fate of three women in Russian society to-day in the form of three vividly written stories. Madame Kollontai calls her book *Ways of Love*, and it is in fact three typical forms of erotic experience that are shown in it. The *Love of Three Generations* is the title of the story that reveals most clearly the complete perversion of social ideas which has been accomplished by Bolshevism. It deals with the experiences of three women, grandmother, daughter, and granddaughter. The grandmother, who belongs to the intellectual bourgeoisie, is the manager of a travel bookshop for national enlightenment. She falls in love with a doctor and for this reason leaves her husband, who is the colonel of a regiment, appealing to the natural law of love. The daughter, who is in a close comradely relation with her husband, refuses to leave him, although her physical attraction to another man is much stronger; but in the end she begins a new life with a young workman, who reveres her as the great leader of the Party. Soon, however, the twenty-year-old granddaughter becomes her mother's rival, and one day the mother finds her daughter in the arms of the young workman. The mother is indignant, not because her husband and her daughter love each other, but because the girl has given herself to a man she does not really love. But the young girl justifies her behaviour with these words: " You seem to be taken aback mainly because I can give myself to men merely because they please me, without waiting to fall in love. But look here, you need time to fall in love; I have read novels and I know how much time and strength being in love costs. But I have no time. At present, we have very responsible work on hand in the department, and in any case . . . "

An important new problem which has arisen in connection with this upheaval of family life, is the care and training of children, and also the later position of the child towards its parents in particular, and grown-up people in general. Here, too, conditions have developed in a direction which is quite different from the customs of

other countries. Russian children attain to considerable independence at the age of five or six: the children in the public educational institutions already enjoy at that age an autonomy such as in other countries is hardly granted to whole nations: they are frequently grouped in " children's republics," which will be dealt with in greater detail later; the management of all administrative affairs in the schools is in the hands of an executive composed of pupils and elected by the little " citizens " in a general assembly. If one of the members has to be reproved, the assembly usually attends to the matter, the *pros* and *cons* of which are exhaustively discussed.

The State which has permitted such independence in children has also conceded to them a wide field of activity on public occasions, and especially at political demonstrations. Thus a great part of the carnival performances in mockery of political opponents are staged at the demand of children. On the day of a great demonstration all the available motor-wagons are frequently earmarked for the exclusive use of children.

8

The Revolution had far-reaching effects on the life of women as well as on that of young people. In Soviet Russia woman has been placed on complete equality with man in all spheres of public life and labour. The Communist Party in the very first period of the Revolution lost no time in enlisting all available female assistance: they appointed women as commissars and even people's commissars, and entrusted them with responsible posts. A valuable report on the development of the position of women may be found in a book by Madame A. M. Kollontai, the first woman People's Commissar of the Soviet Union. The information in the following paragraphs is partly taken from this work.

Although the Revolution had granted numerous rights to women, the great mass of working women and, still more, of the peasant women, were at first hostile to Bolshevism. The ferment of discontent was stirred up chiefly by the women, and it was the women who most vigorously rejected all innovations. Hunger and privations intensified and nourished this blind discontent to such an extent that the Government was soon compelled to intervene and to evolve a special propaganda to make communism popular among the female population. The first conference of working and peasant women was held at Moscow in November 1918; over a thousand delegates took part, and the conference was intended to form the foundation of all the future propagandist activity among women. A number of propaganda sections were set up, whose function was to win over and educate working and peasant women in town and

country for the Communist Party. In addition to this propagandist activity, the women's commissions also did a great deal of important legislative work: it was they who carried the law legalizing abortion, and they also formed the committees for fighting prostitution and for the protection of mothers and infants.

The enlisting of women for military service in unprecedented numbers by the Soviet Republic was quite a new departure. The co-operation of working and peasant women in military events began as early as the first barricade fighting in 1917. At that time female ambulance corps were formed and fighting troops too, which often intervened decisively in the course of military actions. The repeated attacks of the White Guards on the town of Lugansk could not have been repulsed without the active co-operation of fighting units composed of women. During the war against the monarchist General Iudenich, the Petrograd working women not only formed a corps of several hundreds of nurses, but also took part in thousands in the machine-gun, intelligence, and engineering services. Battalions of women dug trenches and erected barbed wire barricades in the cold autumn weather with the utmost devotion. The women were particularly useful in the so-called " stopping detachments," which were engaged in capturing deserters and persuading them wherever possible to return voluntarily to the front. The number of women killed, taken prisoner, or wounded in this campaign was 1,554; a considerable number of telephonists, women doctors, and women who had fought in the front lines were decorated with important orders.

The women workers took a specially energetic and active part in all educational problems. Not only in the large towns, but also in the provinces of Russia, there are schools for children's nurses, teachers, and instructors, and all these institutions are very well attended. So-called " Aid Commissions " are engaged in explaining the laws for the protection of pregnant women and nursing mothers to the women workers in factories and in supervising the enforcement of the provisions for the welfare of mothers and children.

Women also take part in judicial business both as judges and jurors. They are, in particular, strongly represented in those primitive people's courts which, among the Eastern nations of the Republic, partly supplement and partly replace the " regular " courts.

But the Russian woman has also opened up for herself other spheres of activity. In the industrial district of Ivanovo-Voznesensk there is a factory managed by an ex-peasant woman called Koshanova. Madame Koshanova is about fifty, and has had a peculiar career. She grew up as a child of peasants in the Nizhni-Novgorod district and married when very young; by a series of misfortunes she lost her children and everything she possessed. Her husband became

blind as the result of an illness, and the young woman found herself alone in the world, helpless, and without means. She at once resolved to go out to seek her fortune, packed up her few possessions, and set out on the tramp with her blind husband. After a month of this, the pair reached Ivanovo-Voznesensk, where by chance they found work and a livelihood. The wife soon proved herself a useful and industrious worker in a factory, rose rapidly, was put on a machine, and gradually learnt all the processes of the factory.

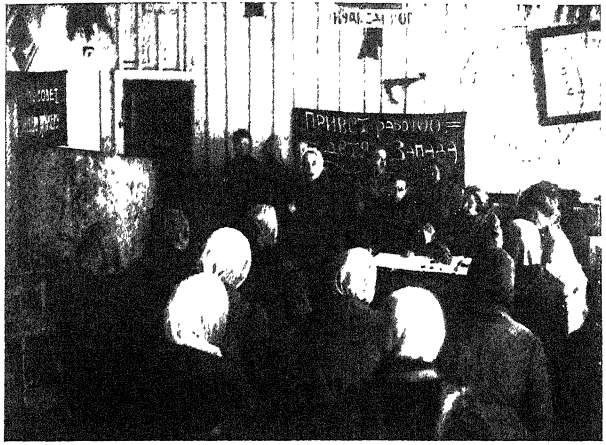
The Revolution suddenly revealed her talent for organization: in the period of universal confusion she seized the reins of government, got possession of the account books, and learned how to use them; she was then elected chairman of the works council, and, finally, after saving the factory at a very critical juncture, was chosen to be managing director. Since then the factory has made enormous progress, and has not only reached but even surpassed its previous productive standard.

Most remarkable, too, is the work of another peasant woman, who edits, publishes, and distributes a manuscript newspaper in her village. The peasants, who are semi-illiterate, laboriously compose notes and articles and send them to the paper; the editress contrives to re-shape and improve even this material, so as to make it suitable for her readers. In spite of the fact that there is only one copy of each issue, which passes from hand to hand, the paper is read in many communes.

Besides her editorial work this valiant and energetic woman has also a library, which she manages on a system of her own: one day a week the books are at the disposal of the younger school children, and another day at that of the older school children and the young people; but the rest of the week they may be borrowed only by adults. As there are very few books in this remote district this woman also writes fairy tales for the tiny children, which she has been publishing since 1920 in a special periodical. Besides all this work she looks after her own homestead and her family affairs, and thus accomplishes an almost incredible amount of physical and mental labour. Her village is also interesting because about half the population consists of ex-waiters from the big towns, who were all driven to take refuge there by a whim of fate. The number of women who do independent organizing work in Russia to-day is very large; they are greatly respected everywhere as the representatives of the " new womanhood."

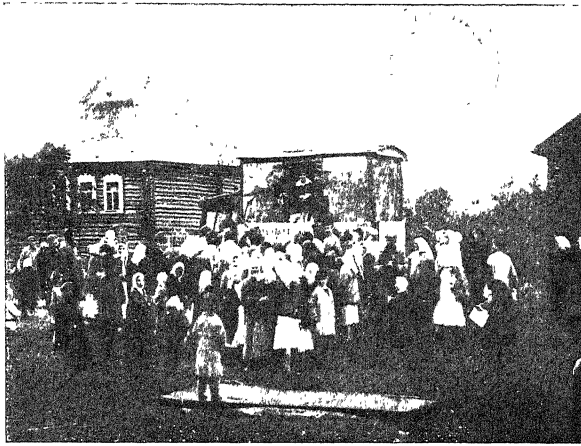
9

Inevitably the fight against tradition very soon came up against those strongly marked peculiarities of the Russian national character,

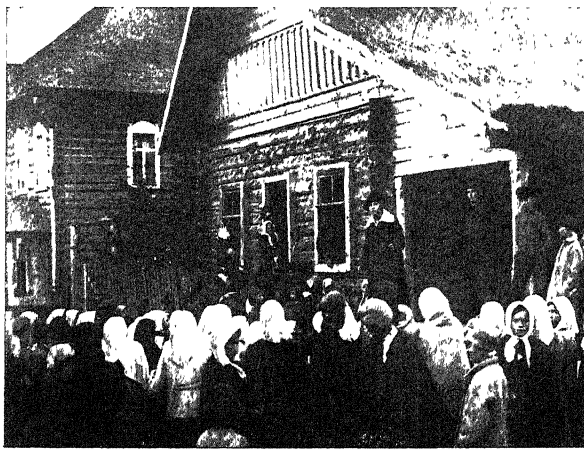


MEETING OF WOMEN IN A VILLAGE

A SESSION OF THE COMMUNIST WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL



PROPAGANDA CAR FOR COMMUNISTIC PROPAGANDA IN THE COUNTRY



A COMMUNIST SPEAKER AMONG THE PEASANTS

its phlegmatic fatalism, its " nichevo-philosophy." This indifference of the Russian to all external events and impressions, which has become proverbial all over the world, was unquestionably one of the most serious obstacles to the spread of the technico-mechanical spirit which the Bolsheviks are trying to make universal. The phlegmatic and passive Russian, who is completely apathetic to everything that happens around him, is entirely unfitted to satisfy communist requirements, and to turn himself into a " human machine," and transform his environment into a super-American machine-world. The patriarchal and primitive methods of work, the Asiatic indolence and slowness of the bureaucratic machine put immense difficulties in the way of any serious reform. Perhaps it would have been possible by hard and unremitting toil to have slowly removed these obstacles one by one, and in this way have in time brought Russian thought and action closer to the technical development of the West. But from the very beginning gradual development was the detestation of the Bolsheviks.

In agriculture, too, they attempted suddenly and without any transition to replace the former mediaeval methods of work by a technical culture which was to surpass even the achievements of America, Germany, and France. Magnificent plans were made for electrifying the whole State, motor ploughs, motor tractors, and threshing machines were sent to the remotest districts, and the whole country was to be covered with a network of electrical power and transmitting stations. A host of instructors were despatched to explain to the peasantry the advantages of modern agricultural machines, and arrangements were made for lighting the peasants' houses by electricity. Russian agrarian production was in a night to be made independent of all foreign competition by means of the mechanization of agriculture, and the intensity of production so increased that Russia would again be an exporting country. But for that the chief thing necessary was strict organization.

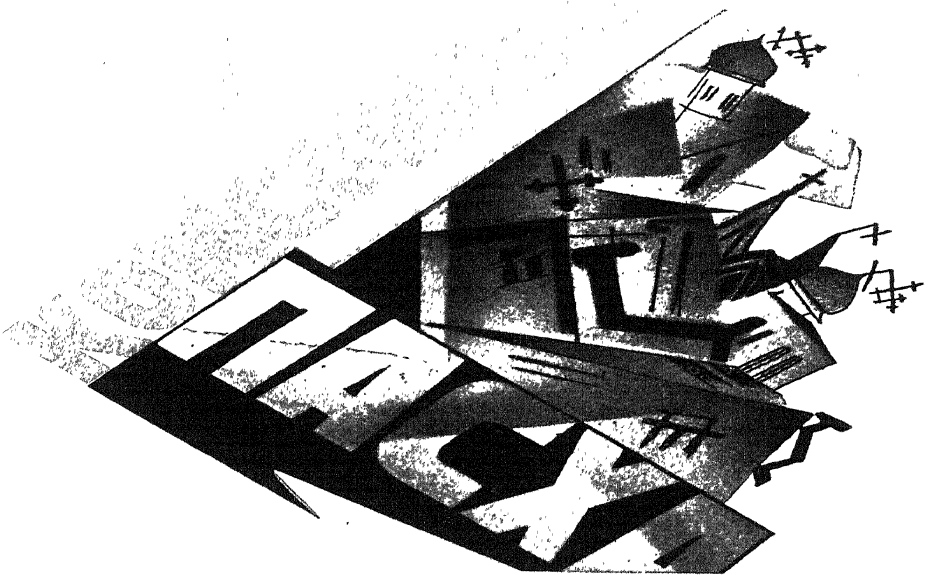
The State bureaucratic machine was also to be mechanized and simplified: Lenin was the instigator of this reform. He rightly recognized that in the bureaucracy there still survived a dangerous remnant of that old world to which the fundamentally reactionary officials felt attracted. In order to root out this abuse, they proceeded to establish in all the central offices " N.O.T. Sections " for the scientific organization of work. These had to decide on the best methods of work and administration for the area under their jurisdiction. One of the chief bodies, the " Inspectorate of Workers and Peasants," was charged with the task of issuing instructions on economy in the State Administrative machine. This commission had to examine the methods of work in the Government offices and abolish all irrational administration.

Meanwhile, the new Soviet bureaucracy had resulted in amazing offshoots which were hardly in the strict sense of the word in accordance with the ideal of a simple, rational, and economical administration. Sosnovski, in his book, *Facts and Men*, which is one immense glorification of Soviet Russia, tells of the situation which developed in a little town: " They sealed up all the shops and proceeded to make preparations for the Soviet stores. For this purpose suitable administrative bodies had to be created, on the lines of the economic section of the Soviet and the subsections attached to it. But," Sosnovski goes on, " they came up against a slight difficulty. It appeared that there was no paper in the town of the kind generally used for resolutions, mandates, and business letters. In a word, there was no ordinary writing paper. They had to wait till the town of Mogilëv should send paper. But that town had its own paper crisis. Not only was there no paper, but it was confoundedly difficult to procure any.

" Someone suggested that one Soviet authority had a permit to procure a certain quantity of paper from Moscow—but had no money to buy the paper. Another authority had plenty of money, but lacked the necessary permit. Simple souls might think that it would be easy to combine the money of the one with the permit of the other, and thus provide the unfortunate town of Bykhov with the paper without which the State machinery could not be set in motion. But the facts were more complicated than one might think, and it is easier for two enemy States to come to an agreement than for two Soviet authorities."

Sosnovski also describes enthusiastically the air service between Moscow and Nizhni-Novgorod; he extols the initiative of the Soviet Government, which, by this modern method of transport, had made the railway superfluous. This seems, indeed, to have been necessary, for in another passage Sosnovski himself describes conditions on the Russian railways: " The farther East you go from Berlin, the dearer —and dirtier—does travelling become. Of course, we hold the record. The dearest and dirtiest railway coach is the diplomatic coach of our Foreign Office. . . . The Foreign Office has, I think, only five carriages at its disposal on the line from Riga to Moscow. We are building electric stations, railways, and tramways—are we really not in a position to renovate five railway coaches? What do we mean by such a demonstration of helplessness? "

All these evils were to be remedied by the " N.O.T. sections for the scientific organization of work." From the very outset one of their principles was the rational use of time. With this end in view they soon proceeded to form a special organization under the direction of Gastev, which was given the name of the "Time League." This " Time League " was organized on the model of all the other



DECORATION OF A NOTICE OF AN "ATHEISTIC EASTER FESTIVAL"

AN UZBEG WOMAN

Her face until recently was covered by a veil.
As a Bolshevik she has laid aside the veil

WOMEN DELEGATES FROM THE EAST AT A DEMONSTRATION

communist organizations: as in the Party organization, the unit is the " cell "; cells of this kind have been formed in all Government offices, in the Army, the Navy, and the factories. Several of them unite to form local groups, these are further organized territorially for each Government, for the various States, and finally as the " All Russian Council of the Association of the Time League."

There is at least one cell of the League in every town in Russia, and nearly every newspaper devotes a special corner to the " Fight for time." Gastev has issued a series of positively military orders to the members of the League, in which, for example, every member is enjoined to supply himself with a watch and endeavour continually to apportion his time properly. Gastev regards the fight against the systematic late arrival of officials as one of the chief duties of the League, a point in which his efforts will have the sympathy of Western Europe. Every member is not only bound to be punctual himself, but also to supervise the punctuality of others, which, it is hoped, will gradually change the direction of the whole of productive life, and also bring about a fundamental reorganization of the individual. Every adherent of the Time League must also provide himself with a " chronocard," on which he has to apportion the time at his disposal exactly like a time table. These chronocards have to be brought to the places where general social work is done, to the universities, for example. Every time a professor is late, it must be noted on the card, and an estimate made of the amount of time wasted in this way. If a member of the League arrives late at his place of work, part of his wages have to be paid as a fine to the League funds.

Gastev makes a distinction between the objective and subjective estimate of time, and, as it is comparatively difficult to arrive at an objective standard in Russia, he has largely concentrated on the subjective. According to Gastev, everybody ought to go to bed and get up at a fixed hour, eat at fixed hours, and thus aim at an " objective hygiene of cerebral activity."

Gastev has grouped his guiding principles in an appeal, which reads as follows:

" First of all discover the mechanism of time and then reform!
" To calculate time means longer life.
" The time schedule is as follows:

One key for economy of time,
One key for systematic work.
One key for a sound regime.
One key for mental hygiene.
One key for an unshakable will.

" If you have the key of time, you are armed, you are the engineer of your life, you are the fitter of the time of others, of the factory, of the institution.

" Keep a schedule for calculating time and you will produce a revolution of time."

To save time, efforts were also made to mechanize language and to introduce short and pregnant expressions instead of the ordinary rambling Russian circumlocutions. Gastev issued a series of appeals and orders for the purpose of stemming the prolix and long-winded methods of writing and speaking used by his comrades, and accustoming them to clear, brief, and easily understood sentences. This was all the more necessary because, since the right of freedom of speech had been universally guaranteed, everybody crowded to meetings, tried to play a part there, and delivered speeches which were mostly empty babble. A whole crowd of people, who lacked all training and aptitude for journalism, applied for posts as labour correspondents and newspaper editors. Gastev was obliged, therefore, to issue dictatorial instructions to speakers and reporters in one of his orders:

" *Directions for Speakers.*

" No speaker is to get up to speak at a meeting unless he has a proposal to make.

" When you make a report, never end it with a question but always with a proposal. A speech which does not end with a proposal is pure waste of time.

" *Important Advice to Reporters.*

" Note the date, the hour, and minute of every event!

" Write so concisely that it will be impossible to delete a single word!

" Accustom yourselves to writing clearly, so that others will be able to read your manuscript.

" Accustom yourselves to writing quickly!

" In every announcement, stress the most important points.

" Whenever possible, supplement every report with drawings and graphic representations.

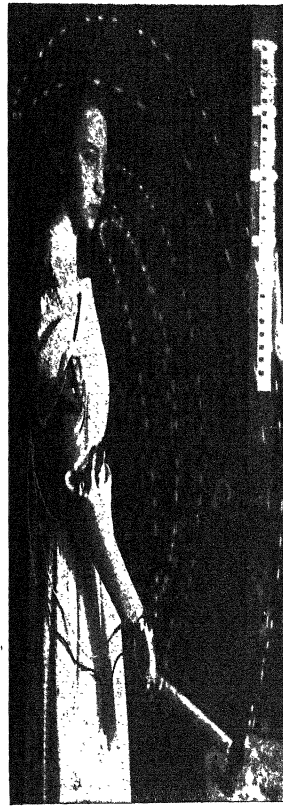
" Do not destroy your notes till they have been used! "

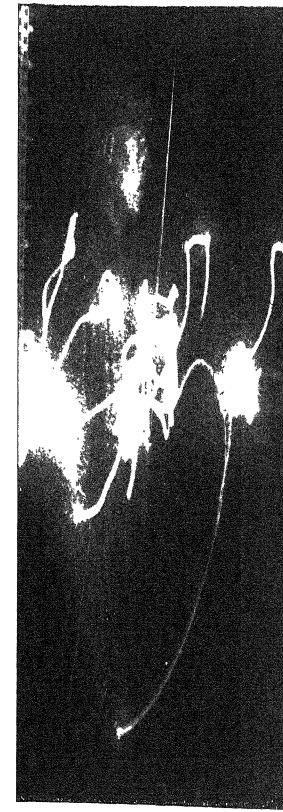
10

This clumsiness of expression was felt very severely now when Russian life was being expanded by many innovations; the centralization of trade and industry, the taking over by the State of the theatre and the other arts and the numerous new institutions connected with these, required suitable new terms and words. As these were not forthcoming, use had at first to be made of occasional

A. K. GASTEV, THE CREATOR OF HIS "MECHANISED MAN"

MRS. A. KOLLONTAI, THE FOUNDER OF THE NEW COMMUNIST DOCTRINES OF MARRIAGE AND MORALS





RUSSIAN TAYLORISM IN GASTEV'S INSTITUTE

Chrono-cyclographic method of controlling progress in learning the right use of a hammer. The fixed light points give a picture of the optimum output

Investigations into the rational handling of firearms by means of chrono-cyclographic photography. Course of the firing movement

circumlocutions which, like every metaphor, represent a mass of words and more or less tedious definitions. Extraordinary lengthy expressions were invented, especially those designating the new offices, and, on the inspiration of Gastev's experiments, it became obviously necessary to shorten them somehow. We can distinguish two principles in the contracting of these roundabout expressions: they either combined the initial syllables of a group of several words to form a new expression, or else formed an artificial word from the initial letters of the various words. To avoid a hiatus, the cacophony of two consecutive vowels in the first form of contraction, consonants were inserted between the vowels. The word " Sovnarkom " may be taken as an example of this kind of contraction, it stands for Council of People's Commissars. " Kompart " is a contraction of the words Communist Party, and Komsomol, a combination of the initial syllables of three Russian words meaning Communist Organization of Youth. The following may serve as examples of the other kind of new formations: " VTSIK," for the All Russian Central Executive (four words); " STO," for Council of Labour and Defence (three words); and " VZNKH," for Supreme Council for National Economy (four words). There are also contractions composed partly of the first and partly of the second kind. For example, the President of the All Russian Central Executive is known as " Pred-VTSIK," " pred " being a syllable of the first word, while " VTSIK " consists of the initial letters of the words; the two together indicate and describe his title. If two analogous offices have to be distinguished, in conversation, it is usual to prefix an abbreviated form of the Government in question to the designation of the office.

Thus, for example, " Mosgubstrakh " indicates the Insurance office of the Moscow Government, while " Petrogubstrakh " means the corresponding authority for Petrograd. It is not possible in Russian to form compound words, such as can be employed in Western European languages to designate complicated conceptions, and therefore these contractions fill an urgent want. It is not surprising that the Russian poets of to-day have also adopted these expressions, and use them freely both in verse and prose. Some extreme revolutionaries never speak or write except in these logograms, and assert that a new Russian language will evolve from such mechanically arranged initial letters and syllables. Gastev, however, the creator of the mechanized new man, by no means confines himself to trifles like the introduction of chronocards and contracted words. He aims at revolutionizing his fellow citizens in thoroughgoing fashion. In his book, *A Sheaf of Orders*, he uses only " hyperlaconic and hypertelegraphic " expressions. His decrees, too, which contain his instructions to the Communist youth on the mechanization of life, are composed in this peculiar language.

These maxims of Gastev are regarded in Bolshevik Russia as the tables of the law for the new humanity: the following are the most important:

" Sharp eye, keen ear, alertness, exact reports!
" Unremitting struggle, mastery of the body!
" Mighty stroke! calculated pressure, measured rest!
" Pregnant organization, skill! "

Another order of this kind is almost in the form of a poem:

" Equip yourselves, fitters!
" Take your tools, the material, and the place of work,
" And from these things create a well thought-out organization!
" Do you wish to be an organizer?
" Do you wish to be a good organizer?
" Do you wish to be a trustworthy organizer?
" Choose for yourself a small field of work,
" The size of an arshin, and build every detail,
" Calculated to a minute, to a fraction of an inch!
" Do not take much upon yourself, think well what you do! "

Another " poem " of this kind reads:

" Youth! Join the iron ranks of training!
" Regard the machine, the tool!
" Create the machine, organization!
" First of all the most intensive attention!
" Then action!
" First of all the most intensive attention! "

A third " poem " reads:

" Technology to-day does not recognize elegant products; it demands an exact method of perfection.

" It is important not only to rest, but to utilize this rest, to organize.

" It is time to give up sapless drudgery, and to introduce organization wherever the foot treads and daily life goes on."

II

But this " Sheaf of Orders " is only a kind of by-product of the manufacture of the " mechanical " Russia of the future in the Gastev " Institute for the Scientific Organization of Work and the Mechanization of Man."

This institute works on the lines of the Taylor experimental investigations in America, but with the idea that the new Bolshevik man of the future can be produced here. On entering the building,

you find here a number of investigators engaged in fixing the general maximum output capacity of the human organism, and there, in a psychological-technical laboratory, other people, who are trying to ascertain how much energy is used in every movement, and how this movement can be made in the most economical way. The " balance of energy " is fixed as exactly as possible, and efforts are made carefully to ascertain the optimum periods both of work and rest. The " exact psychological working cadence " has already been discovered; the effects of various physiological and psychological stimuli are exactly studied, and all " micro- and macro-motisms " are determined with the utmost exactness. Precision in the investigation of the energy of the organism here celebrates rousing triumphs.

Gastev has discovered the basic law of movement: all movements, in his theory, may be traced back to two archetypes, an " up " and a " down." On the basis of these two archetypes, a careful analysis is made of all complicated combined processes of work and an investigation of the most rational methods of carrying them out. Anyone entering the front door of this institute as a normal living man, issues from the back door, after passing through countless laboratories, as a completely perfected working machine. But, if so desired, " directive apparatus," " administrative machinery," or " management regulators " can also be produced as well as " labour machines." Their practicability is proved—or at least Gastev maintains it is—by the success attained in the use of these appliances, which are unfortunately still animate. Once all superfluous movements have been eliminated, you finally do away with all waste of energy and arrive at a higher output with a less expenditure of energy. Where formerly a certain time was necessary to produce one unit of production, by Gastev's methods, three units can be produced in the same time. This principle of organization is extended to all physiological elements, and thus a " rhythmic rotation of work " is produced, which not only completely does away with all disturbing caprices and eccentricities of the nerves and the soul, but removes all constitutional mental obstacles. The machine man is produced—and guaranteed to function properly.

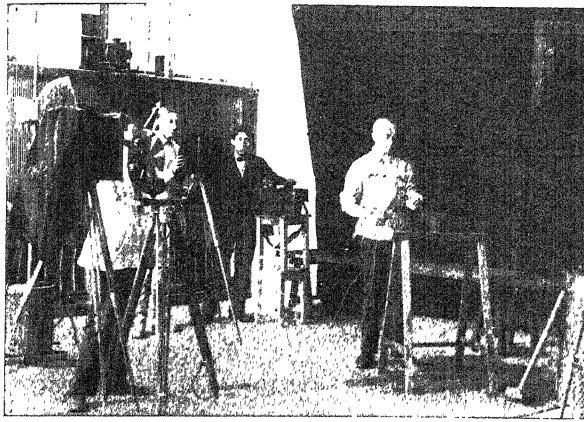
These methods have, of course, to be started at the earliest possible age: " The first school instruction," says Gastev, " must improve the quality of the pupils by continual practice. We must make the conditions of the animate working machine as favourable as those of the inanimate one. The most important of these is the proper environment, by which we mean the equilibrium of the energies of the pupil. The rudiments of work must be taught very carefully in pure air, good light, and all the necessary instruments must be available. All the limbs must be individually trained;

statics and dynamics will first be taught, then the handling of tools, the movements making up the stroke, the exercise of hand, elbow, and shoulder. In this way the maximum quantity of work for a given supply of strength will be produced. After practice in the tempo and sureness of the stroke, the right and left hands must be made equally skilful. This is followed by intensive practice with hammer and chisel, and here, too, the pupil must be taught to be ambidexterous. This method produces the greatest efficiency in all kinds of fitting and machine work, and can be elevated to a system of instruction and organization which will lead to a new civilization."

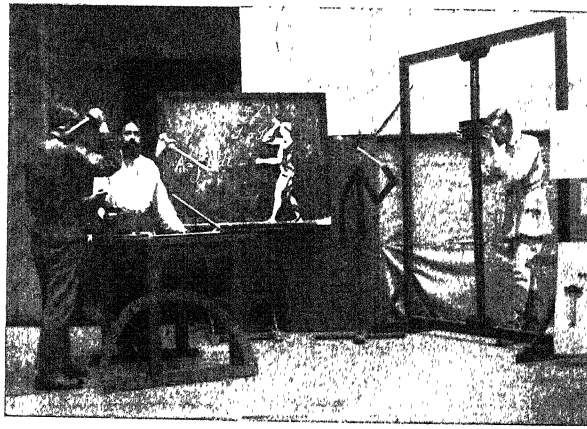
But if the utilization of human energy is to be carried to the farthest point, a whole number of social institutions must be reformed or entirely abolished. With this end in view, Gastev demands a reorganization of diet, housing conditions, clothing, transport, and several other social institutions, in order to make a fundamental revolution in man's former way of life. The activity of the reformers must not, however, be limited to the great centres and the cities. Gastev also expressly requires his pupils, and especially the young ones, to journey over the rural districts, and to preach the new doctrines as a kind of mission. " Individual pioneers, even if at first they be only fifty lads," he says in one of his appeals, " must proceed to the country and there begin to spread the new civilization. By iron self-discipline and training, by developing all the physical capacities and the calculating reason, by strict regulation of all the processes of life and action, by gradual extension of the field of work and the attraction of young people in ever-increasing numbers, the enormous energies of the slumbering country will be awakened and combined in an organization."

Although to a European the methods of mechanization employed by Gastev may seem like exaggerated and excessive Americanism, especially when applied to a soil which has been regarded as poorly cultivated and centuries behind the times, the Bolsheviks themselves regard Gastev as not radical enough. He has not been spared the reproach that he is a counter-revolutionary *petit bourgeois* and his methods antiquated. The watchful eye of the real revolutionary immediately discovered bourgeois remnants in Gastev's method of working: " His ideal is the *petit bourgeois* craftsman, his aim is to make man a hammer, a file, or a knife. But the new proletarian epoch stands in the sign of the great modern machine, the mass man is to be a part of a mighty aggregate of turbines, and not transformed into an antiquated cobbler's awl." Once the reactionary character of Gastev's work was discovered, it was not long before thoroughly heretical and objectionable views were found in Gastev's writings themselves:

" We must not only love the machine," he says somewhere,



CHRONO-CYCLOGRAPHIC PHOTOGRAPHY IN THE GASTEV INSTITUTE OF LABOUR
WORK WITH TWO CAMERAS AT RIGHT ANGLES



A DEMONSTRATION IN GASTEV'S BIOMECHANICAL LABORATORY

A fitter is watched during his work with the aid of a dioptric telescope and a frame of coordinates

EXTERIOR OF THE " CENTRAL INSTITUTE FOR SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH INTO HUMAN LABOUR " IN MOSCOW. (GASTEV INSTITUTE)

CINE-PHOTOGRAPHY OF THE LABOUR PROCESS

Russian Taylorism in the Gastev Institute

" that machine which is often merely a fancy of the mind for us, we must also love the tool.

" We must bring hammer and knife into the foreground. Whoever can handle the hammer skilfully, has grasped the secret of the rotary press. Whoever handles the knife skilfully, knows the secret of all cutting machines.

" Have done with great schemes, be artists of labour! Every man must be able to cut and file metals. Every man must be able to fell, plane, and cut up wood. This exercises the capacity for organization."

12

Immediately doubts were raised about the revolutionary uprightness of Gastev, the authorities were again at a loss for the proper way of bringing about the mechanization of man. A series of new theories sprang up, and the debates on the most suitable methods of producing the " mechanized man " began all over again. Proposal after proposal was put forward. Even Trotski, the most critical and clearest mind among the communist leaders, who otherwise is very skilful in blasting Bolshevik Utopias with sharp and caustic criticism, cannot get a moment's freedom from his faith in this doctrine of salvation:

" The socialist man will rule all nature by the machine." This is how Trotski begins an enthusiastic description of the age when the human race of the future will be able to move mountains, change the course of rivers, and conquer the seas. " Idealistic blockheads will protest," he goes on, " that all this is tedious and fruitless—they are indeed blockheads. Of course, the whole globe will not be ruled off and parcelled out and all the forests will not be turned into pleasure gardens; thickets and woods will remain with the woodcock and the tiger, but only where man decides that they shall remain. The machine is not in opposition to the earth; it is a tool in the hands of the man of to-day in all spheres of life. However much the modern town may change, it will never revert to the village of the past; it will, on the contrary, raise the village to its own level; therein lies its most important function. The town is transitory, but it points a way to the future, while the village, as such, is the past and can therefore find a place only in a folklore museum. . . . Communist everyday life will not be formed by blind chance, like coral islands. It will be created, tested, directed, and corrected by thought. When once everyday life has lost its elementary nature, it will cease to stagnate. . . . Nay, more. Man will ultimately progress to rebuilding himself harmoniously; he must see to it that he makes the movement of his limbs more precise, more purposeful, more

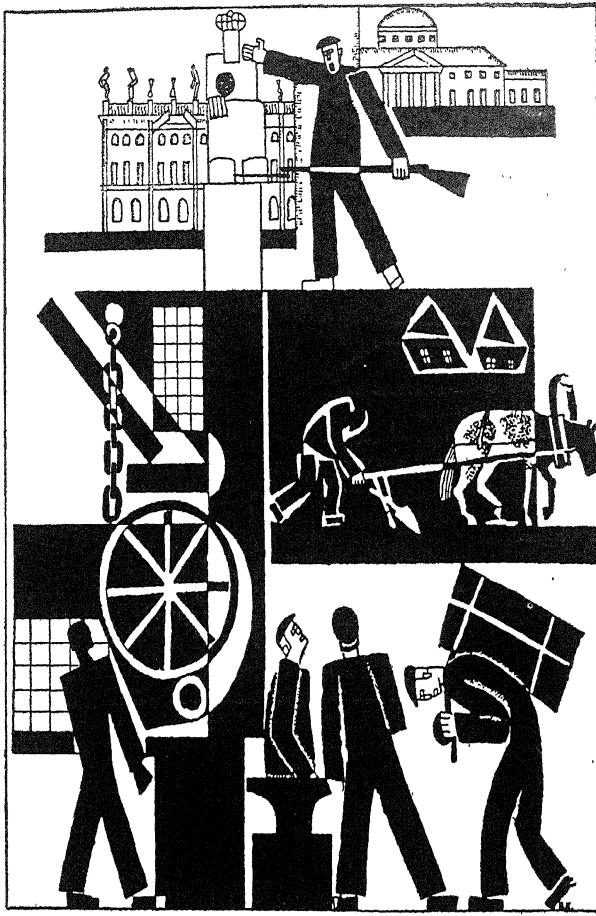
economical, and thus more beautiful. He will immediately find pleasure in bringing the more or less conscious physical processes, breathing, the circulation of the blood, digestion, and reproduction, under the control of the reason and the will. . . . The human race, already fossilized as *homo sapiens*, will be fundamentally remoulded, and will make itself the subject of artistic selection and psychological training by most complex methods. Man began by driving the dark forces of nature out of industry and ideology, and replacing barbaric routine with technical science and religion by the theory of knowledge. Afterwards, he banished the unknown from politics by replacing monarchy, first by democracy and a rational parliamentary system, and ultimately by a reasonable, completely open Soviet dictatorship. However oppressive may be the effect of the blind force of the elements on economic relations, they will be driven out from there also by socialist organization. . . . Man, having become free, will maintain his organs in equilibrium, and try to develop his tissues uniformly, until ultimately the fear of death will become merely the appropriate reaction of the organism to the threat of danger. There can be no doubt that the anatomical and physiological disharmony in man and the unequal development of the tissues which this involves, are the main cause of the morbid and hysterical fear of death which clouds the reason and nourishes stupid and degrading dreams of a better world beyond the grave.

" It will be the highest task of humanity to learn to control its own feelings, to illuminate the instincts with consciousness, and make them transparent and clear, to bring the areas below the threshold of consciousness under the direction of the will, and thus to make itself into a higher biological type, or, if you like, to form a race of supermen.

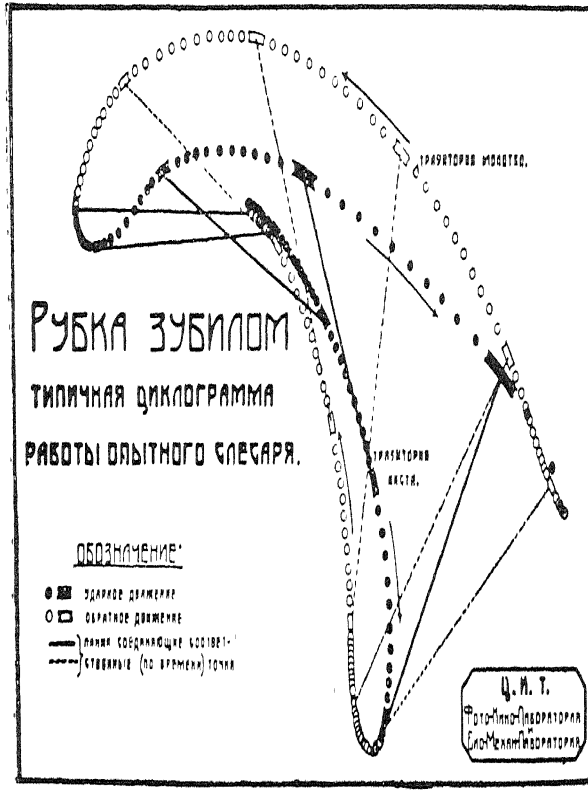
" It is as difficult to foretell the degree of self-control to which the man of the future will attain as it is to prophesy the ultimate results of his technical capacities. The construction of society and the physiological and psychological self-education of man will be combined in one and the same process. All the arts, poetry, painting, music, and architecture will celebrate this process in marvellous ways. . . . Man will be infinitely stronger, wiser, and more sensitive, his body will be more harmonious, his voice more tuneful, and his movements will be regulated by a new rhythm. . . . The average man will rise to the level of an Aristotle, a Goethe, or a Marx, and behind this ridge new and loftier peaks will shine."

13

Whatever wonderful things are proclaimed here and elsewhere to a marvelling world, however enormous may be the energy spent



APPEAL FOR THE SCIENTIFIC ORGANIZATION OF LABOUR
(Drawing by Krinski)



TIME CURVE OF THE MOVEMENT OF A HAMMER IN CHISELLING

(Gastev Institute)

on the destruction of old traditions, however many decrees and orders are issued for building up a new human culture, Bolshevism, like all previous attempts to put Utopian theories into practice, has had none the less no tangible practical results. The strong impulse, the mighty onset to form a new world, was arrested half-way to the goal, and created a fantastic between-world, which, by its divided nature, must be included among the most extraordinary cultural and social phenomena that have ever been known. A cross between Oriental indolence and lethargy and extreme Americanism, between the moujik and the machine man, now represents the new Russia before the world; a medley of mixed forms chaotically jumbled together is now the predominating feature in the face of the Bolshevik Empire.

In the Moscow streets, by the side of a house that recalls the Middle Ages, you have an American sky-scraper, and this curious pair of twins, which couples the Asiatic past with the latest achievements of technology, not only gives the streets a characteristic note, it also represents that feature which recurs in all manifestations of Russian life. In the country, this mixture of two worlds of civilization is shown in the churches, which have the wires of electric high-tension conductors between their blue-painted, fantastic, bulb-shaped towers. You may still see nomad village shepherds clad in rags with a shawm of birch bark on their hip, side by side with the " village American " endeavouring to modernize his surroundings. In the peasants' huts, six or seven persons still lie close together the whole winter through on the big stove, the dying grandfather and the new-born grandchild; the rooms are still lit by smoky splinters of resinous pine wood; the meal for the whole family is still prepared in the samovar. It boils the water for the tea, they drink the hot fluid and eat bread with it, and this forms the only certain food of these people. If the rain comes in or the house crumbles or the cow is sick, the peasant does not get off his stove: he accompanies all these events with the one comprehensive word " Nichevo." The soil is still worked with a wooden plough and a wooden harrow, if not with the bare hand. Into a village of this kind, which has been, so far, as shut off from the rest of the world as in the time of Rurik, suddenly comes an awesome monster, the " motor plough." Enemies from the city have brought it, and it stands before the peasants' house like a strange, sinister beast. Even if the " nichevo " man does not understand what the splendidly wrought parts, the glittering valves and regulators mean, he nevertheless suspects the machine to be a cunningly devised scheme to bring disturbance, haste, and confusion into his old comfortable existence.

In the midst of this propaganda for " superamericanism " and a

" mechanical civilization," many signs show what a gulf separates the Bolshevists in reality from these goals. In Gastev's " Instructions for the mechanization of life " are hidden many maxims which throw all too clear a light on the smallness of the chance of success for any such " Americanizing ":

" You speak of civilization? Do you wash every day with soap? Do you wash your hands before meals? Do you rub your body with a clean soft cloth? Don't speak of civilization until you can say you do these things."

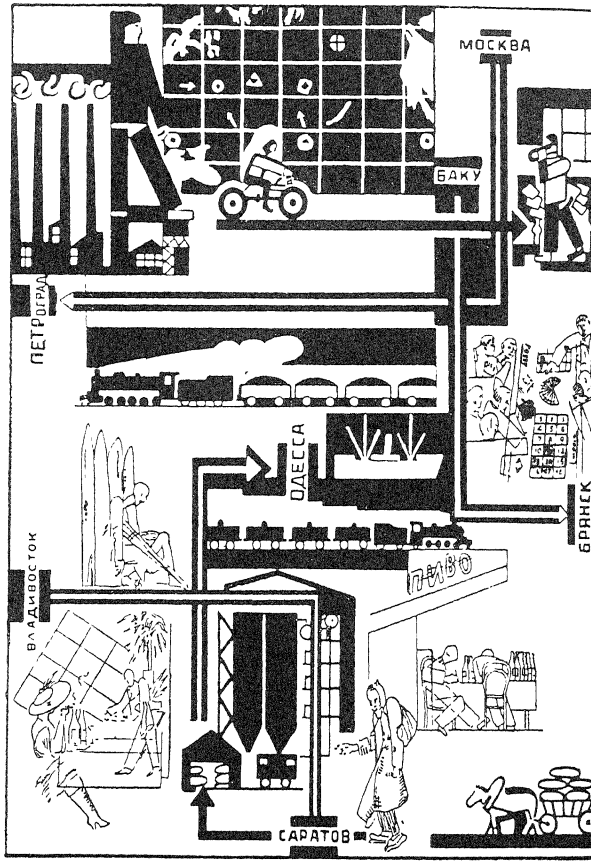
In Russia, the great masses of the people have still to learn all the things which for centuries have been the everyday customs of the Western European. But the communists will not have this, and are trying to introduce innovations which would meet with considerable opposition even in Western Europe. Thus, everywhere you have the most glaring contrast between existing conditions and the newly introduced reforms, which sometimes produce an extraordinary effect.

In the towns the " Time League " makes a great show. It has its representatives in all the Government departments, all the State officials are *ex officio* members of it, and yet the picture of a Moscow official room has not changed in the least. As in the time of the tsars, the old official sits behind his piles of documents and drinks tea, one cup, two cups, ten cups. Urgent papers come to him, parties crowd round his window—he drinks tea. If the people become so impatient as to be likely to cause a scandal, he opens the flap of his window and says " Seichas," which is to say " In a moment." But it is another week before he opens his window again. If the unlucky applicant hears the word " Zaftra! " (To-morrow), then, if he is at all acquainted with the ways of the country, he knows he may as well go quietly home, as his business will not be dealt with for at least a year.

The introduction of the Western method of dating was predestined to create confusion. In practice, the authorities and the Reformed Church celebrate Christmas by the new style, and the Tikhon Church and its adherents by the old. Thus it may happen that some members of a family are finishing their Christmas festivities when the other conservative members are beginning theirs. But generally they compromise and celebrate all festivals twice over.

The destructive effects of the new customs on marriage and the other relations between the sexes have already been described; it remains only to mention the complications to which the entry of the family into politics may lead. If a communist is the husband of a woman who does not belong to the Party, peaceful relations in the

"VICTORY IS STILL AHEAD OF US"
(Gaston)



CONSTRUCTIVIST-SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATION OF COMMUNIST "SYSTEMATIZED" TRADE AND INDUSTRY CONTRASTED WITH THE OLD RUSSIA

The parts in black show the rationalized organization of trade and industry under Soviet rule, while the pen drawings are intended to represent the still existing old Russia, with its hunger and misery, its beggars, gambling dens, and demi-mondaines. (Drawing by Krinski)

Примите за правило:

несколько раз в день

делайте глубокое вдыхание

и выдыхание.

THE STROKE CONSCIOUS OF ITS PURPOSE

"Make it your rule to breathe deeply in and out several times a day!"

(Gastev's command to youth to unite in iron corporations)

" SKILFUL CONTROL OF THE BODY. DO NOT TRY TO MAKE A CHANGE ALL AT ONCE. BEGIN WITH TRIFLES !"

(Gastev's order for concise and exact expression, rapid writing, reading, drawing, learning, and for specifying date, hour, minute)

family circle can only last till the " party cell," to which the husband belongs, decides that every communist must remove the pictures of the saints from his house. This may seem a trifle to the husband, to the wife it too often means a catastrophe. This causes a division between husband and wife which often leads to a break-up of the marriage. Or the reverse may happen: the wife may neglect her household to take up politics, and this has frequently the most unfortunate results and also often ends in a complete rupture of the marriage. It often happens that a man who belongs to the Party does not raise a finger to help his family, and leaves all material and other cares to his wife; she has to work hard and also endure reproaches for her uncommunist behaviour. Among the curious causes which may break up a marriage in Russia must also be mentioned the case in which a husband forbids his wife to attend communist meetings, and she prefers divorce to giving up her political work. In these circumstances, it is not surprising that increasing numbers of communists are refusing to marry Party comrades, and prefer to marry women outside the Party, who will remain at home, look after the children, and manage their household. Many communists openly declare that, if they married communists, they would have to go about in rags and see their children die.

14

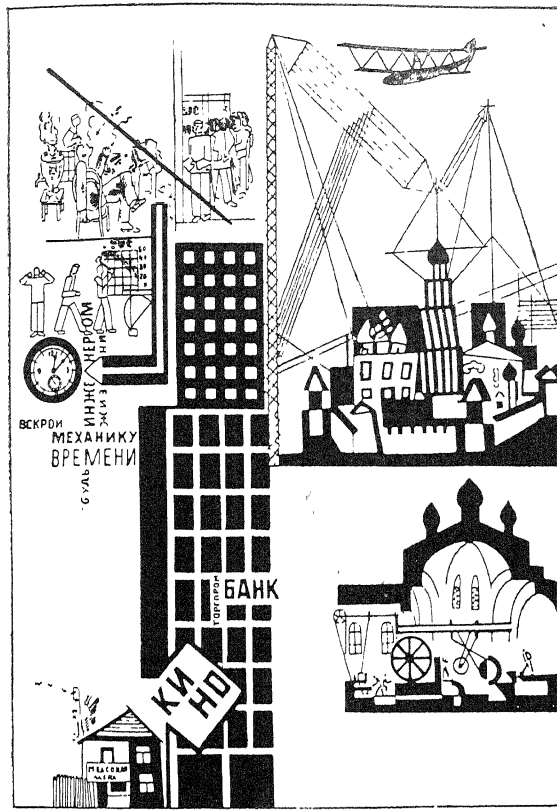
Complete confusion also reigns in religious matters. It is true that almost every communist belongs to an anti-religious " enlightenment cell "; but it fairly often happens that a " godless " father, after the birth of his son, first goes through the prescribed ceremony of " red baptism," and afterwards sends for the priest. At funerals again, you may see, carried in the same procession, the red flags of the works council and also miracle-working ikons; after the singing of the " International," the priests intone their funeral hymns. A well-known peasant authoress reports that, after Lenin's death, many country women had masses said in the church for the soul of the departed, and old women dedicated candles with prayers for Lenin's bliss in the next world.

Many members of the Party, either from habit or from indolence, still wear a cross on their breasts, which was hung round their necks when they were children. Most peasants and workmen still keep ikons in their rooms, because they are there and an ornament on the walls, and because the room would seem too bare, dark, and unhomely without them. But new pictures of the saints are practically never bought, for this would be a serious infringement of party rules.

An extraordinary picture of the chaotic conditions which the anti-religious propaganda has produced may be found in the reports of the Commission which, under the chairmanship of Professor Bogaras Tan, was charged with a sort of ethnographical investigation of outlying districts. These reports show that in localities only a few versts apart, and even in the same places, part of the population celebrates " red Easters " and holds mockery processions under the direction of anti-religious agitators, while a number of others not only take part simultaneously in the orthodox ceremonies, but even worship magicians or profess a very primitive phallic cult. In the Kazan Government, at the very time when the Communists were making reports on the astounding progress of the atheistic enlightenment propaganda, the whole Kheremiss tribe officially renounced Christianity and returned to the old pagan faith. The same thing happened in the Belovzevsk district: there, too, part of the population is organized on atheistic lines, while the other part has gone over in a body from the orthodox Church to paganism. In many districts pagan sacrificial feasts have been revived: oxen and rams are slaughtered and the flesh is cooked in special cauldrons and eaten with peculiar rites. Sometimes it even happens that the peasants find a compromise between the contradictory opinions by holding a joint festival to celebrate the pagan gods of old, the saints of the orthodox Church, and the new heroes of communism.

Only a few versts from Moscow a scene was recently enacted which is most characteristic of the contrast between official enlightenment and popular superstition. In the Tver Government a woman found a bit of wood which possessed the peculiar property of shining in the night. She immediately imagined that this chip was a sign of God, nay, God himself, so she prayed to the wood and told the other peasants about it and soon they also worshipped the new God. On receiving information of this from the priest, the Government finally sent three hundred soldiers, who attacked the village with a machine gun in an attempt to deprive the peasants of this piece of wood. But the peasants armed themselves, repulsed the attack and captured the gun, and it cost the authorities a great deal of trouble before they finally got possession of this peculiar " God "; it now adorns a glass case in a museum in North Russia.

A doctor in a recent number of *Pravda* related an experience he had in Central Russia during a tour of inspection. He arrived in a remote village where the peasants still lived in primitive conditions and showed such suspicion of him that he was actually afraid they would murder him. One night he was wakened by an uncanny buzzing noise. He sprang out of bed, and in a state of real alarm ran to the window. In the moonlight he saw a scene which dispelled his fears, but aroused even greater amazement. On the square



CONSTRUCTIVIST-SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATION: "THE NEW EPOCH"

In the top left-hand corner the old "nichevo" Russia is symbolically struck out, below is the new Russia of mechanized activism (the "Time League," etc.). Below that is present-day Moscow: the old idyllic house with its dovecot cheek by jowl with the sky scraper. On the right, are views of the old orthodox churches transformed to suit modern needs; church towers as antennae. In the interior of a former church is an engineering shop. (Drawing by Krinski)

A CONSTRUCTIVIST SYMBOLIC DRAWING OF THE RUSSIAN VILLAGE BETWEEN THE OLD AND THE NEW AGE

1. Mechanized agriculture and the up-to-date village.
2. " Komsomol " (anti-religious propaganda) and the raising of devils.
3. Old village room.

(Drawing by Krinski)

about a dozen naked girls were collected. An old dignified-looking peasant was addressing them. The doctor could hear only one sentence: " My children, be honest or the whole village will be lost; only those who are really innocent may participate." After this appeal some of the girls withdrew with a dejected air and put on their clothes again. The rest were yoked to a plough. This remarkable procession then made its way to the gate of the village to the strains of a strange choral song. Next day, the doctor learned that this was the revival of a custom dating from the most dim past. To rescue the village from plague, a three-fold furrow had to be drawn round it made by a plough drawn by naked innocent girls. The presence of the doctor was the sole reason for the ceremony, the villagers being convinced that he had brought a plague with him. The doctor thought it advisable to pack up his baggage as quickly as possible, and to leave the village while it was still safe.

The scant success that has really attended the official enlightenment campaign is shown with all the clearness necessary by the prosecutions instituted against the " renovators of ikons." One day, in a village called Novo-Romanovska, not far from the little country town of Pochep, a well-to-do peasant, Romasiukov by name, spread a rumour that an ikon in his house, a picture of the saint, had renovated itself in a miraculous manner; the metal *riza* (ornamentation) had begun to shine and was as bright as a mirror and just like new. The general belief in the miracle was reinforced by the fact that the priest, Ustimenko by name, immediately hurried to the house and held a service before the ikon. People streamed from all quarters to the peasant's house; his farm business began to increase immediately, as he was able to buy a cow and other stock of all kinds with the proceeds of the numerous offerings. The news of the miracle soon spread afar, and this example of " renovating " proved infectious. Soon " renovated " ikons appeared in all possible places, till the authorities intervened and brought a number of the participants into court. A nun called Lokhanova, who had sold " holy water from the renovated ikon " to the peasants, had to appear, as well as the priest Ustimenko, a teacher, who was also the fortunate possessor of a renovated picture of the saints, the moving spirit in the " renovation," Paul Romasiukov, and finally a number of peasant women who had been the first to spread the rumour. A staff of experts, chemists, psychiatrists, finger-print experts, and clergy took part in the case, which resulted in several heavy prison sentences. But as these sentences threatened to result in a general rising of the peasants of the district, an amnesty was proclaimed. Thereupon " renovation " immediately began to flourish again, and even assumed an epidemic character in many parts of the Empire. Great processions of pilgrims began to roam all over the country; every moment came

news of another miracle from another part, and in time these wandering masses of men became a perfect plague. The authorities took the most drastic measures, imprisoned as many miracle-workers as they could lay hands on, investigated all the cases which were patent swindles, and showed up the frauds, but all to no purpose; they were completely unsuccessful in subduing this extraordinary movement.

In connection with these cases, the police also turned their attention to a man who was known and famed in the whole Novgorod district as the " wonder-working Mishinka." He lived at some distance from a little village, on the edge of a wood; his house was surrounded by a high fence and all the entrances and exits were always locked and were opened only after loud and long knocking. At the official investigation the house was found to consist of a number of cell like rooms, each provided with a door and a tiny window. There were new coffins in six of the rooms, which were found to contain newly cut shavings and old tools of all kinds. In one of the rooms was the chest with a glass cover which contained the famous " relics." These miracle-working remains, which had been the chief proof of the vocation of this singular saint, turned out, on closer inspection, to consist of a collection of bones, some scraps of velvet, and a wooden head which appeared to have been removed from the statue of a saint. Near the house was the famous bathing place, where Mishinka usually drove out evil spirits; there also was the " magic sword," an iron staff with which the " magician " used soundly to treat the backs of some hundreds of peasants from the surrounding districts. A second bath had been fixed in a hole in the ground, and consisted of a little basin paved with stones of different colours. Many sick people, suffering from various diseases, consumption, typhus, and syphilis, had zealously bathed in it. On Mishinka's orders many credulous persons had daily plunged simultaneously into the water to take part in the cure. If the bath alone did not seem to the wonder-worker to be adequate, he proceeded to stronger means, and trounced the patients soundly with his iron staff or with a " healing " besom. This proceeding, in the course of which Mishinka himself usually went into a state of ecstasy, was solemnly named the " driving out of evil spirits."

15

That such things are still possible in the Russian Empire, with its eagerness for enlightenment, is a serious symptom; but sometimes the paradox of Russian life seems to try to surpass itself, and com-

A COMMUNIST PARTY CONFERENCE

In the chair a peasant woman

INDESTRUCTIBLE SUPERSTITION IN RUSSIA

Divination by dipping chips of wood in the icy Neva

bines the most extreme contrasts in one and the same individual. Thus, in a village near Tver, lives an orthodox priest who, besides his cure of souls, also practises the calling of a heathen magician; if his blessings and exorcisms give out, he has recourse to old magic formulae and experiments with them. In another village the leader of the anti-religious organization of youth thunders against the orthodox Church, and at the same time exercises the vocation of a village magician. This lucrative trade was originally carried on by his great-grandfather, and passed first to the grandfather and then through the father to the son. He began his business of wizard as a boy of twelve, and soon attained great success and extraordinary fame by his most effective formulae; his curses in particular were held by old and young to be unsurpassed in efficiency. It was due to this prestige that he was appointed leader as soon as an "anti-religious cell" was formed in the village. By his oratorical gifts he soon won the whole commune over to atheistic doctrine and received a number of special honours from the Moscow central office. But, although his entry into the anti-religious movement had made it necessary for him to renounce his Christian faith, there was nothing to prevent him from carrying on his magical activities. He contrived to make the one side support the other, for when his logical arguments against religion threatened to give out, he found effective help in various magical formulae, signs, blessings, and imprecations. It is not surprising, therefore, that scientific materialism, supported by magic, had an unprecedented success in his district. It may be remarked in passing that on the day that one of his curses failed, the zealous wizard decided to go to the University to study medicine.

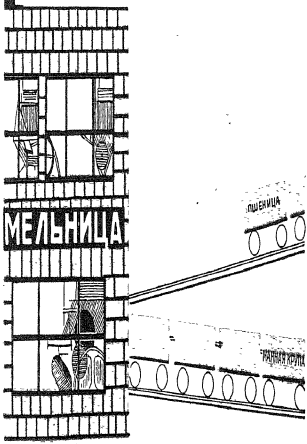
Not only are there wizards in the enlightened Soviet Union, there are also witches: one of them lives in a village in the Novgorod Government; she comes from Stettin, however unusual that may sound for a witch. Her spells and curses are very highly esteemed in the whole Government, which does not, however, prevent her from being an enthusiastic member of the Communist Party and a zealous co-operator in the materialistic scientific enlightenment of the people.

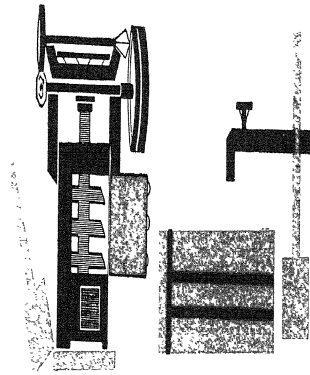
In judging this chaotic confusion, it must not, however, be forgotten that the Russian Empire covers an enormous territory and that its civilization has always shown the most glaring extremes. The gulf which once divided the serfs from the Petersburg intellectuals was so enormous that it is almost unimaginable, but in a few years all these great differences were completely levelled. Since there were countless millions of moujiks and only a few hundred thousand educated townsmen, it is not surprising that the levelling, which then took place, was marked mainly by a reduction of the isolated individuals of high intellectual standing, and hardly at all in

the raising of the masses to a higher level of education and culture. But one thing is certain: it is only in the laboratory that Bolshevism has approached its goal, the "remoulding of man." There one or two examples of a queer homunculus may have been turned out; these artificial men are not living, and the existence of the great masses who make up the sum of the Russian nation has been thrown into the greatest confusion by all these reforms of a Europeanizing and mechanizing kind, but has undergone no fundamental change.

COMMUNISTIC UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN PEOPLES IN MOSCOW READING ROOM

О том, что рис весь съеден—известье
Читают в главном крупяном тресте.
Читают и говорят: „без круп быть
не годится,
Надо на манную крупу перемолоть
пшеницу".





Чтоб была помягче глина,
Не спеша, железным ртом
Глиномяльная машина
Ту же глину мнет потом.

А. САПУНА.

PAGE FROM A BOLSHEVIK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BOOK

Stylism Representation of Technical Devices

Chapter XI

ILLITERACY AND THE NEW EDUCATION

I

THE Bolsheviks by drastic measures did, indeed, succeed in making an almost complete clearance of the remnants of the old spirit wherever it lurked; but they were then faced with the difficulty of replacing the old bourgeois culture and its exponents by a new staff of socialistically trained intellectuals, whom the Bolshevik world could implicitly trust.

Both pupils and teachers for the proletarian culture had, in fact, to be reformed, as it were, over-night, and the whole of education had to be built up on entirely new foundations. For, while the Bolshevik propagandists of culture, the theatrical producers, painters, poets, and architects, were working feverishly to evolve a new artistic style, the two most important Bolshevik leaders, Lenin and Trotski, recognized that it was necessary to create the basis for a communist culture by the spread of general education among the masses, before they could proceed to erect the vehemently demanded " ideological superstructure " over the new system of Government, the dictatorship of the proletariat. " Our age," Trotski quite rightly declared, " is not the age of a new culture, but at the most the first step towards it. We must first of all grasp the chief elements of the old culture so as to be able to prepare the way for the new. The main task of the proletariat, which is now in authority, is to seize the whole apparatus of culture, which was not at its service before, industry, the schools, the Press, and the theatre, and in this way prepare the way to culture.

" For us in Russia, this task is made still more difficult by our poverty of cultural traditions and by the material devastation of the last ten years. After its seizure of power and many years of struggle to maintain it, our proletariat is compelled to use all its strength in the creation of the most elementary conditions necessary for its existence, and, in addition, to assimilate the A.B.C. of culture in the truest and most unequivocal sense of the word. It is not for nothing that we have imposed on ourselves the duty of completely abolishing illiteracy by the tenth anniversary of the Soviet Republic.

" The mere fact that hundreds of millions will learn for the first time the art of reading and writing and the first four rules of arithmetic, is in itself a new and immeasurably great achievement. The new culture, by its nature, will be designed, not for a privileged minority, but for the masses. Quantity will here also turn into quality; simultaneously with the growth of the mass character of culture, its level will also rise and its whole aspect change.

" The most important task of the proletarian intelligentsia during the next few years is, therefore, not the creating of a new culture—for all foundation for that is lacking—but the systematic, rational, and critical assimilation by the backward masses of the most necessary elements of already existing cultures. We must not erect a class culture behind the backs of this class, we must establish it in conjunction with them."

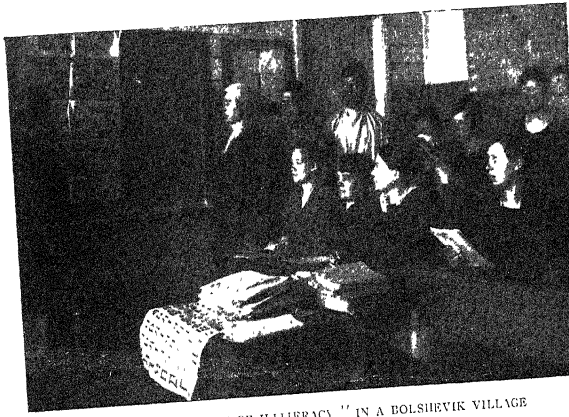
Lenin, too, emphasized with extraordinary clearness the necessity for a universal, elementary, national educational system, by remarking in one of his speeches that it was absurd to attempt political enlightenment while the whole country swarmed with illiterates. " A man who can neither read nor write is outside politics; he must first learn the A.B.C., without which there can be no such thing as politics, but merely rumours, gossip, fairy tales, and prejudices."

Lenin was convinced that it would never be possible to form a communist society in a country without national education; the most important task of the Communists was the extermination of illiteracy, so that even the very word would be foreign to the next generation. He held the fight against illiteracy to be as urgently the duty of every Bolshevik as armed resistance to the counter-revolution: " Every man who can read and write must regard it as his official task to teach a few illiterates to read and write. The mobilization of all persons able to read is one of the most important aims of Bolshevism."

Instruction in reading and writing could, of course, only have a meaning if every person who was instructed in the art were also afforded chances to read, that is to say, only if the libraries were extended and improved. " We must make use of all the books," Lenin declared, " which are available; we must proceed to set up an organized network of libraries which will enable the people to utilize all the books that exist."

" No one recalls so well as the writer of these lines," says Pokrovski, " Lenin's anxiety for the immediate utilization of the books in the hands of the Bolsheviks. Perhaps a collection of his orders on the library system will be published later; in it will be found two reprimands addressed to the Enlightenment Commission on their intolerable slowness—or so it seemed to Lenin—in carrying out important measures in this direction. Lenin desired that all

A YOUNG HOUSEKEEPER, BEFORE SHOPPING, GOES WITH HER A B C TO THE SCHOOL FOR ILLITERATES



THE "LIQUIDATION OF ILLITERACY" IN A BOLSHEVIK VILLAGE

SCHOOL FOR ILLITERATES

books should come into the hands of the workers, and that, for this purpose, the public libraries should be linked up in a communication system on a grand scale, which should make the circulation of all books possible. It ought to be possible to ask for and obtain in the most remote districts of the Urals any book desired—on comparative philology, for example.

"It is hardly necessary to say that this idea went far beyond the limits of our technical resources and potentialities, especially in the civil war period. Lenin soon saw this and did not insist further on the practical realization of his idea. But how right he was from the political point of view is shown by the fact that the Russian workers as early as 1879 on their own initiative established a similar system for the circulation of prohibited literature."

2

Bolshevism thus regarded the fight against illiteracy as its first and most important task in the sphere of national education. With regard to the actual extent of illiteracy in tsarist Russia, there are no statistical data later than the year 1897, about which date the Imperial Government took up a general attitude of disapproval towards all statistical investigation; no doubt because they were afraid that statistics might reveal the seamy side of the existing order. The Soviet Government in 1920 completed a new census which related to the year 1918.

A comparison of the two investigations shows that in 1897, out of every 1,000 male Russians between the ages of 15 and 50, 318 persons could read and write; by 1918 this figure had risen to 394. Out of every 1,000 females only 131 could read and write in 1897, while by 1918 this figure had risen to 244. The average for both sexes is 233 and 319 respectively.

The improvement in elementary education was thus not particularly great, but it must be remembered that the Soviet Government had only been in power for a year or two when the second census was taken. There is no doubt that the tsarist régime is mainly responsible for the low standard of education among the Russian people, as it not only did nothing to advance national knowledge, but even tried to check it. This is perfectly clear from the attitude of the Imperial Government towards all attempts at national education, and not least from the results of the 1897 investigations.

In contrast to this, the Soviet Government, in a decree issued in 1919, declared the elimination of illiteracy to be one of their first aims, and since then they have made extraordinarily strenuous efforts to reach it. But besides the Bolshevik administration, the working

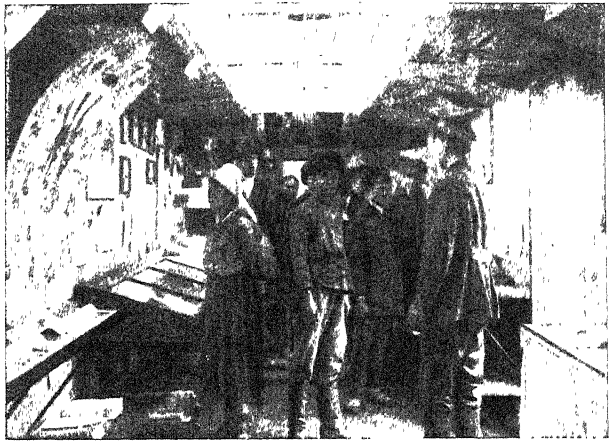
classes themselves have tried to exercise an enlightening influence on the mass of the population. The two fighting organizations, "Down with Illiteracy" and the "Friends of the Proletarian Students," are the result of the initiative of factory workers; their aim is to further popular education by all means. The Association, "Down with Illiteracy," raised a loan of their own for this purpose, and are using the proceeds for the building of schools and reading rooms in the rural districts.

Often, it is true, the subordinate authorities did not rightly recognize the duties imposed on them. The Russian State Publishing Office, to begin with, devoted itself not so much to producing the books urgently necessary for elementary education, as to the mass publication of political and literary propaganda, which could be accessible only to a narrow circle of educated readers. This was changed later, and the State Publishing Office produced enormous numbers of primers, elementary reading books, and similar publications. These are very different from the elementary school books used in all other countries. Their main aim, in accordance with the Bolshevik philosophy, was to arouse the interest of the children in machines and their constituent parts at a very early age. Therefore, the Bolshevik reading books had no pictures of flowers, animals, and such-like "bourgeois idyllic" things, but only representations of technical objects.

When the Soviet Government had been in power for about two years, about six million adults were receiving instruction in reading and writing. The fight against illiteracy was carried on most thoroughly and successfully in the army and among the workers: on 1st May 1922, at least so the Soviet Government maintained, every red soldier was able to write a letter and read an easy book. In contrast to this, it must be pointed out that the tsarist authorities strictly forbade any progressive newspapers or books to be read in the barracks. It is claimed that the "liquidation" of illiteracy among the urban workers will be completed by 1927.

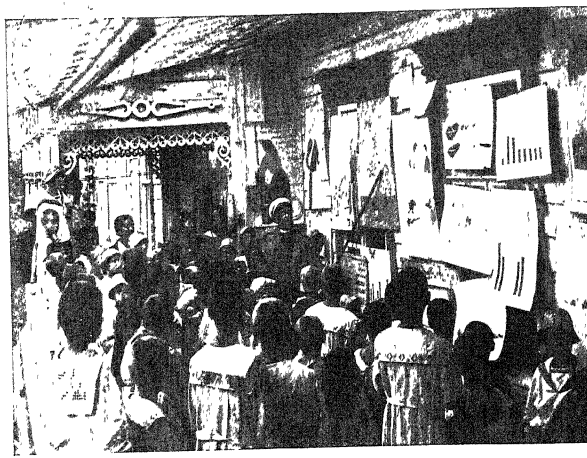
Considerably more difficult were the problems with which the efforts of the Government had to contend in the rural districts. The high percentage of illiterates among the rural population, and the great distance between the houses, made a whole army of teachers necessary, and these could not, of course, be provided in a moment. None the less, Lenin in his lifetime definitely stated that by 1927 illiteracy would have finally disappeared from Russia; like so many other Bolshevik promises, this should not be taken quite literally; but this one may really be fulfilled, if only to a limited extent, by the date specified.

The chief weapon in the fight against illiteracy in the rural districts was the building of elementary schools, which were fre-



THE INTERIOR OF A COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA CAR

TEACHING IN A PROPAGANDA CAR



TRAVELLING SCHOOL FOR PEASANT CHILDREN

IN THE READING-ROOM OF A "RABFAK" SCHOOL

quently connected with the railway stations; in addition to these "liquidation offices," to the number of about 3,000, there are many newly established institutes for the further education of adults, reading rooms, clubs, and "people's houses," where there are also libraries and collections of periodicals. At the present time there are about 10,000 of these reading rooms and clubs.

The powers of the supreme authorities, with regard to school affairs, were mostly of a quite general nature, and left considerable scope for the initiative of individual officials. The universal zeal to co-operate in raising the level of national education, which captured part of the bourgeois intelligentsia also, soon led to all kinds of exaggerations: a fury of organization took possession of the country, and tried "while you wait" to raise the whole educational and school system to Utopian heights. Although much of it at once proved impracticable, certain positive achievements must be noted: vocational schools, trade schools, and institutes for agricultural training in connection with model factories were established and led to excellent results. All these efforts were aided by the great interest felt in the widest circles.

In addition to the schools proper, numerous children's homes were also established, where children of from five to seven are educated. A comparison of the census results already referred to is interesting in this connection: in the year 1897 there were practically no such institutions in existence, while at the present time there are nearly 3,000, in which instruction is given to 370,000 children: in 1,300 of the children's homes the children are not merely day scholars, but are permanently boarded. The last-named institutions, which are mainly for orphans, support more than 65,000 children.

3

All the establishments described so far more or less pursue the same aims as the old schools, but the Bolsheviks soon proceeded to form educational institutions for the proletariat on a new principle. Since they had almost no experience of this kind of thing, they began by setting up "experimental schools," which were intended to test all the various types and forms of instruction from the point of view of their applicability to the special aims of the proletariat.

The first experimental school of this kind was opened at Moscow in the summer of 1918, and at the same time the first "experimental commune" for school children was started in the village of Litvinovichi; the main function of these two institutions was the theoretical investigation of all problems arising out of the application of new methods of teaching.

Besides the actual instruction department, these schools include

also special experimental sections, children's homes, children's clubs, and various similar organizations; there are also generally vocational schools and courses for adults, sometimes also for teachers, in connection with them.

M. Pistrak, the director of one of these schools, has given a detailed description of their principles and working methods: "The experimental stations for national education are affiliated to organizations which cover wide areas with a great number of children. Special mention must be made of the first experimental station for national education directed by S. T. Shatski, which is very interesting from a pedagogic point of view. It works over an important area in two districts of the Government of Kaluga, and maintains there several schools, educational institutions, and courses of instruction, as well as a central institute which deals with the affairs of the whole. In addition, the Moscow station possesses a first grade school, a children's club, a kindergarten, and a museum with a library of educational literature. All these institutions, which have a joint management both educationally and financially, are responsible for the education of about 1,500 children.

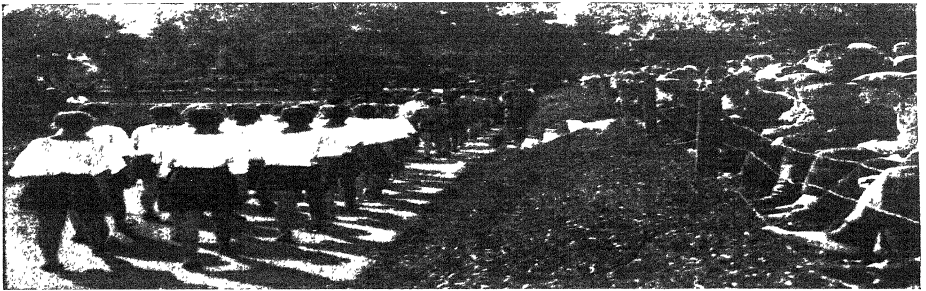
"The function of the first experimental stations is the working out of the most suitable forms of organization for larger institutions for national education and the investigation of the mutual relations between school and environment. Not only are experiments made in pedagogic laboratories, but also ordinary schools are established, the conditions of development of which are carefully studied. Great importance is also attached to the permanent courses for teachers, which are in the nature of scientific schools.

"The second experimental station is at the Shatur peat electricity works. There, in a remote wooded swamp, a town has arisen inhabited by a thousand workers and their families. The institute, with its thirty schools, works in this new settlement and exercises a great influence on the whole cultural life of this working-class town.

"The third and youngest experimental station covers ten institutes in the Government of Riasan, and aims at producing the most fitting type of village school. One thing is common to all these institutes: they gradually draw all the other schools in the neighbourhood within the circle of their influence.

"Besides these and similar experimental stations, there are a number of others, each of which devotes itself to one special problem. One of the most important is the biological station of young students of nature in the neighbourhood of Moscow, which is called after the late K. A. Timiriazev. Natural science has the chief place in its programme of studies; it receives children with an expressed preference and gift for the biological sciences.

"The school at Mstera in the Vladimir Government is also of an



GYMNASTIC DISPLAY

PUBLIC RACES BY YOUNG GIRLS

YOUNG "LENINISTS"

original kind. This district has long been well known because its population is mainly engaged in the manufacture of painted wooden ikons. Following this tradition, a well organized school of arts and crafts has been built up, which gives a seven years' course of general education and a four years' course in arts and crafts to intensify the craftsman skill of the pupils.

" In addition to the experimental stations, there is also a number of children's homes engaged in the study of special problems, such as the ' Karl Marx Children's Home,' which is devoted to arts and crafts. The institutions for less gifted children, under the direction of Dr. Koshchenko, are devoted to a very serious problem; they are doing very remarkable work. Finally, mention must also be made of an experimental station for the social protection of children; it receives mainly street children and young delinquents.

" In addition to all these schools, which are under the control of the National Commissariat for Education, there are numerous independent institutions founded mainly by private initiative. Special mention must be made of the ' Children's Town ' of San Gallen, near Leningrad, which has developed from the old Teachers' College; this College trained teachers for the local peasantry and still pursues the same objects.

" Detailed and complete statistical data of the position of the Russian experimental schools do not yet exist, and, therefore, only the institutions which are under the control of the Commissariat for Education will be mentioned here. These schools, to the number of about 30, are attended by 7,300 children; of these 4,500 are boarders and are maintained entirely by the State; the number of teachers and technical assistants is 1,250. The number of experimental schools maintained by the local authorities is from 30 to 40; in Moscow and Petersburg alone, these institutes are responsible for the education of more than 10,000 children.

" Besides these experimental communes ' factory schools ' have also been established in Russia, which are intended to secure the future supply of highly qualified craftsmen. These mostly train turners, electrical engineers, smiths, fitters, and moulders in a four-year course. At the end of each school year, the pupil has to pass a theoretical and practical examination, after which he is promoted to the next class. These schools have complete autonomy, all the work is organized by the pupils, discipline is exercised by a pupils' council, and the teacher is little more than an experienced adviser.

" In order to improve the physical training of the students, gymnastic exercises are arranged both before and after school hours. These are adapted to the special conditions of the school, and exercise the muscles which are not used during working hours."

4

In all these educational institutions the greatest weight is laid on encouraging the pupils to practical activity and to manual work and on instructing them, in accordance with Marxist principles, on the relations between the means of production and social conditions. The new teaching method which has been introduced in Soviet Russia is based mainly on the so-called " complex system " or the " synthetic method." The main point is to group the material which is the natural outcome of the life and work of the pupil round a logical conception which, when further developed, leads to fresh illumination. S. Lilina, the directress of education in Leningrad, has summarized the aims of the new Russian educational system as " the training of free Soviet citizens who are not weighed down by the ballast of the past." The ideas of the other Bolshevik educationalists, Pistrak, who has already been mentioned, Paramonov, Blonski, Shatski, and finally the People's Commissar for Education, Lunacharski, are all moving in the same direction; their main endeavour is to encourage the self-education of the pupils, to remove everything superfluous from the teaching programme, and to direct the education of the masses mainly into concrete practical spheres.

In connection with the " complex system " already mentioned, the principle was formulated that human work must form the starting-point of all considerations. But since nature comes before human work and human work presupposes the contemporary social structure, the programme is arranged in accordance with three points of view, first the treatment of nature and man, then human work, and finally social life.

Every subject is at first investigated in consultations between teacher and pupils, in order to arrive at a working plan for getting to the heart of the problem; then the whole body is divided into smaller groups which have to do special preparatory work on the lines of the committees in Western European parliaments. The results of these detailed investigations are then discussed and criticized by the whole body. In the course of his work, every pupil recognizes the necessity of making himself expert in certain subjects, and thus acquires a desire for further experience.

The danger of this method degenerating into a game is checked by the fact that almost all the schools are more or less closely connected with an agricultural or technical undertaking, the requirements of which influence the choice of the subjects taught. The factory educational institution and the agricultural school are the two foundations on which modern Russian education is to be built, the factory school in the closest touch with an industrial undertaking,

the agricultural as the central point of cultural efforts in the rural districts.

The noteworthy results of the reform of education in Russia are due not least to the active co-operation of the teaching staff. The teachers very soon recognized that they would have to train themselves in quite a new way if they were to rise to the demands of modern education. They zealously attended the numerous teachers' courses organized in all the larger centres to meet this need for training. These courses give instruction in the natural sciences, pedagogics and Marxist social doctrine, and in addition various conferences are held in which various current questions of school reform are examined and discussed.

Lenin also attached great importance to the training and improvement of the teaching staff, and declared that the Russian national school teaching must be brought up to a standard which it never attained, and never could have attained, in the bourgeois social order.

Considerable importance is also attached to proficiency in sports. All endeavours of this kind are most vigorously supported by the trade unions; every industrial undertaking has its own sports committee, and the Central Council of the Union has established a special council for physical culture.

Remarkable care is taken that these sports shall not involve physical injury to the children: all those who take part in the various physical exercises are examined once a month by special doctors, and may only take part if they have a certificate from the sports doctor. There is a special Central Institute for Physical Culture which trains sports and gymnastic teachers, and a profusely illustrated sports journal reports fortnightly on everything that happens in this field.

5

But in all these efforts to improve the general level of education among the population and especially among the young, the Bolsheviks never lose sight of their special party-political interests: they always try by education to exercise a political influence on young people in the direction they desire. The children are to defend and carry on the work which their elders have begun. Young people undergoing instruction are at present mainly grouped in two great associations of a political character, the Federation of "Pioneers" and the "Komsomol" Association. The latter is mainly given up to anti-religious propaganda and the spreading of atheistic doctrines; about half of the young people of the working classes belong to it. Even in the rural districts the Communist Union of Youth (the *Komsomol*) has attained considerable influence, and has in some

places become the chief Bolshevik representative in the district. Boys and girls between 16 and 18 are subject to strict training in this association, so that they may be turned into trustworthy and useful communists. As a compensation for the many obligations which the membership of this union imposes on young people, the *Komsomoltsy* enjoy special privileges, such as preference in choice of jobs at the employment exchanges and an exceptional position at the higher educational institutes.

The association of Pioneers is an imitation of the English boy scout movement adapted to communist conditions. This organization, as will be seen from the official programme of the Moscow Pioneers, is less closely connected with the schools than with the industrial undertakings to which the parents of the members belong. In summer, the Pioneers organize military manœuvres and spend weeks on end in camp; in winter, they hold meetings and discussions under the guidance of their leaders, whom they themselves elect, and the crowd of young people is politically trained and educated. Both organizations, the Pioneers and the Komsomoltsy, have their own headquarters in all the larger towns.

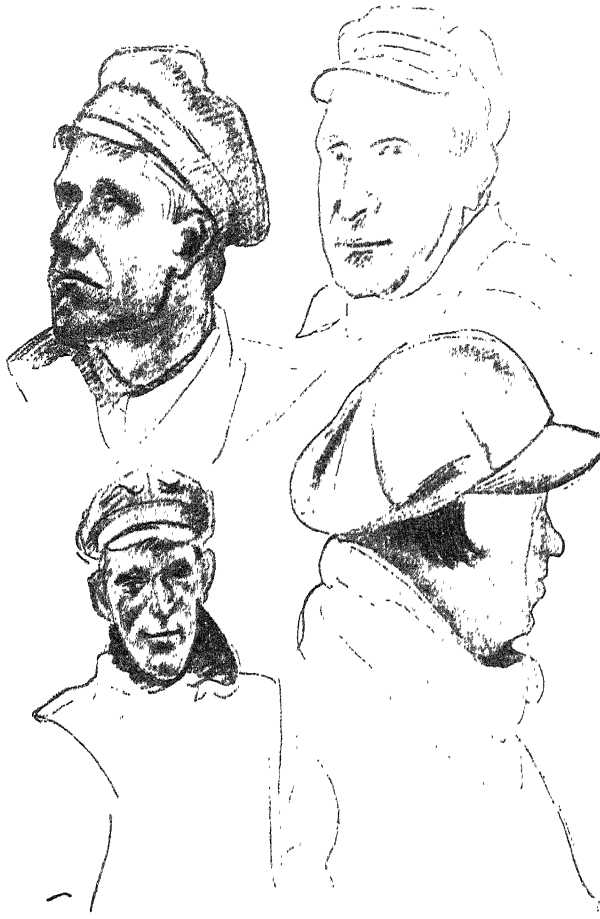
The " song of the young Leninists " may be quoted as characteristic of the spirit and sentiments of these associations of young people. In prose—the original is in verse—it runs something as follows:

" The five-pointed star is rising over the earth. We proletarian children will build a new world. Forward boldly, you Leninists! The commune is our watchword; let each of you fulfil the commands of Lenin.

" We shall relieve the communist youth. We are the friends of every worker. The children of the world shall form one family. We will show life a new way, for the old have need of rest. We are the children of communist heroes; the spirit of the warriors is strong in us. We will build the commune sooner with the aid of science. Labour and science shall unite to make us stronger. Books will be useful to us and make our work easier. With united strength we are resolved to master science and press on further.

" Come, you children, follow our fighting cry! We are free minds and not slaves. We are resolved to be tenacious and steadfast—like Il'ich Lenin."

But it is not only outside school hours that children are influenced in the direction of Bolshevism; the whole programme of teaching aims at steeping the children in the principles of Marxist philosophy. The main problem of modern Russian pedagogics, under the pressure of the political authorities, is not to limit itself to introducing the



TYPES OF STUDENTS IN THE ZINOV'EV UNIVERSITY
Drawing by Radlov

TYPES OF WORKMEN STUDENTS
Drawing by Radlov

pupils to individual branches of knowledge, but as far as possible to adapt all instruction to the doctrines of Bolshevik materialism; the Russian Act on National Schools provides as follows: " The whole work of the schools must aim at developing the proletarian class consciousness and the instincts proper to it in the pupils, at emphasizing the solidarity of all workers against capital and preparing the children for useful productive and social activity."

One important method used for training the children in this direction is allowing them an extensive autonomy, which, however, is only really practicable when the children remain in the school during their free time, where, that is, direct instruction is combined with a children's home. In this kind of institution, the autonomy of the children is carried to lengths that can be found nowhere else in the world: the organization of these children's homes is exactly like a small republic which is governed by a president and a staff of co-workers. All these " officials " are pupils who are accustomed to deal with the teachers on a footing of complete equality, " as one power with another." The children buy the necessary provisions, superintend the distribution of food, look after the educational appliances, and see to the cleaning of the dormitories and living rooms. They work in the workshops, manufacture tables and chairs, bind the books for the house library, make gymnastic apparatus, and hold classes in reading and writing for illiterates. In the country districts the school children also look after the poor, give the peasants practical advice in managing their land and households, and thus carry on powerful propaganda for Bolshevism.

Although the union of all children of school age in homes of this kind is certainly very valuable from the point of view of the political effect on the children, no compulsion is exercised; most children still live with their families. Of course, they are influenced as much as possible in the schools on Bolshevik lines; the subjects taught are entirely adapted to this purpose and all objects are removed which might check this influence.

Boys and girls are taught together, and are not separated even at the age when, in Western Europe, people almost always shrink from co-education. Outside school hours, the boys and girls gather together in pupils' soirées, at which the presence of their elders and teachers is strictly forbidden.

6

The principles of Bolshevik education are most clearly described in a speech which Lenin delivered to a Congress of the Komsomol on the subject: " What shall we learn and how shall we learn it."

" Youth," said Lenin on that occasion, " must first try to

assimilate all necessary knowledge. The study, education, and training of the new race must not follow old traditional methods, but must nevertheless make use of all the material bequeathed to us by the old social order. But it is only by a fundamental remoulding of the instruction, organization, and education of youth that our efforts can result in a new communist society quite different from the old.

" For this it is necessary to educate all children on communistic lines. If the study of communism consisted merely of reading as many writings, books, and pamphlets as possible, we could soon attract a large number of boasters and braggarts; but that would only do us harm, since people of this kind are unable to co-ordinate their knowledge and to treat it as communism really demands. It would be utterly wrong to try merely to learn what has been written in books on communism.

" The communist must first be able to take from the old school what is absolutely necessary for him. It would be a great mistake to believe that you can be a communist without assimilating all human knowledge, of which communism itself is the result. As an example of how closely communism is bound up with all human knowledge, take the case of Marxism.

" Marx worked from a solid foundation of human knowledge; he understood that the development of capitalism must inevitably lead to socialism, and proved this by the most exact and profound study of this capitalist society, in which he made use of everything that earlier science could give him. The task of creating a proletarian culture cannot be fulfilled without the most exact knowledge of all that has gone before; it can only be established by reviewing these earlier forms of culture.

" Proletarian culture must manifest itself as a development of all the resources of knowledge which man accumulated under the yoke of capitalist society. You can only be a communist if you have acquired all the treasures which humanity has been able to create in the past. We do not need dead memorized material, but we must perfect every student's knowledge of fundamental principles, since otherwise communism will be mere emptiness, will become a hollow signboard. It is not enough to assimilate all the knowledge that has come down to us, we must also examine it critically from the point of view of its usefulness to us, so that our minds will not be overloaded with unnecessary ballast, but enriched by knowledge with basic principles, which the educated man of to-day cannot do without.

" A communist who, as a result of ready-made conclusions, boasts of his conviction, without first examining seriously and carefully all the facts, with regard to which he must take up a critical attitude, would be a pitiable thing. Even if we deny and abolish the old

school, we must be sure that we have to replace the old teaching methods by an understanding of all human education, so that communism may be a product of thought and an inevitable consequence of great knowledge. Every conviction must be founded on knowledge.

" You are faced with the great task of positive work, which you can only accomplish if you are able to transform communism into a *rule* for your practical work. That is the idea which should guide you in all the affairs of your training and education. The generation which is fifteen years old at present, and which will be the communist society of ten and twenty years hence, must so direct their studies as to be able to accomplish, in a completely adequate way every day in any village or town, this or that practical work, however small and simple it may be."

It was not only in the sphere of elementary education that the Soviet Government tried to exercise a reviving influence; their aims with regard to the universities were equally great. The Bolsheviks regarded the opening of the possibilities of the highest education to the mass of the proletariat as a problem of importance equal to the reform of the scheme of teaching and the spirit in which instruction was formerly given.

For this purpose, the first thing necessary seemed to be the subordination of all university teaching to the political authorities. For this reason the new Government immediately abolished the autonomy of the universities; they completely altered the scheme of teaching at the higher educational institutions so as to conform to their principles, and they ruthlessly eliminated all idealistic tendencies. The faculties of philosophy, history, law, and theology were practically suppressed, and replaced by the exhaustive cultivation of the social sciences; these, of course, had to be taught in accordance with strict Marxist and materialist principles. Almost all the professors who did not acquiesce in the new order of things were deprived of their posts and had to leave Russia.

In order to enable the working classes to attend higher educational institutes, the Soviet Government created a grade intermediate between the elementary schools and the universities, the " Labour faculties." Their purpose is to give men who have come straight from the bench or the plough sufficient instruction in general and humanist subjects to enable them to follow university lectures. These labour faculties, which have about 31,000 students, are intended to form a new intelligentsia from the ranks of the workers and peasants, and in this way to fill up the gap left by the suppression of the middle class.

For entrance to one of these labour faculties, or " Rabfak," a

minimum period of three years' work in an industrial undertaking, and the recommendation, or, rather, the counter-order, of a trade union are required. Instruction is given in the labour faculties in Russian language and literature, mathematics, physics, chemistry, geography, and the history of civilization, as well as in the doctrine of the class war, political economy, politics in general, and historic materialism in particular.

The students include workers, peasants, grey-haired men, and fifteen-year-old boys; soldiers of the Red Army also sometimes take part in these courses. Every new entrant must first pass an entrance examination mainly designed to test his knowledge of reading and writing and the four simple rules of arithmetic.

In practice, these labour faculties do not really provide for the universal instruction of the proletariat so much as for the urgently necessary breeding of " Bolshevik specialists." Strict entrance rules prevent the attendance at these institutes of young people belonging to the bourgeoisie, and limit the students to trustworthy communist elements. These are supposed in a few years to be given all the instruction which in other countries is provided by the grammar and high schools. After graduating from the university, the students are to perform for Bolshevism such intellectual work as the bourgeoisie had often refused to let them do. It is not surprising that the education which the students absorb in the labour faculties does not reach a really serious university standard; but every conceivable effort is made to enable the more gifted students at least to complete a university course.

7

In addition, the Soviet Government has established special colleges, the so-called " Communist universities," for peasants and workers who are members of the Communist Party or in sympathy with it. The oldest of these institutes is the Sverdlov University at Moscow; besides this, there are the Zinov'ev College at Leningrad and two other academic institutes at Moscow, which mainly serve the needs of students of non-Russian nationality.

Admission to the Sverdlov University takes place annually in accordance with special regulations of the Central Committee of the Communist Party; the Committee decides how many students may be sent to the college by each Government and each organization. The students are boarded and receive food and a modest allowance in cash. Besides their studies, which include the natural sciences, Marxism, national economy, and Russian and European politics, the students take an eager part in politics, attend theatres, meetings,

STUDENTS OF THE RED UNIVERSITY HEWING WOOD
(Drawing by Radlov)

STUDENTS OF THE "RED" UNIVERSITY DOING "SPADE WORK"

and lectures, and in addition accomplish a large amount of practical work in the college.

This system produces a peculiar type of student, somewhat analogous to that seen in the German "working student" movement: the students of the Sverdlov University combine mental and manual work, do military drill, saw wood, discuss abstract problems, and put in many hours working in factories.

About eight thousand workers altogether are at present receiving instruction in the communist universities and the labour faculties; they are mostly workers and artisans—about a quarter are peasants. At first, a few members of the "intelligentsia" also attended; but the worker and peasant students were from the start opposed to these interlopers and soon contrived, with the help of the authorities, to bar their entrance to the communist universities. It is interesting to note that finally the Central Committee of the Communist Party categorically refused admission to the labour colleges to all persons whose standard of education is above that of the elementary schools.

One of the most remarkable of these institutions is the "University for Eastern Workers," founded in 1921, the function of which is to "permit the backward Eastern nations to share in communist enlightenment." There instruction is given in the Russian language, the other chief subjects being national economy and historic materialism; the abstract sciences take rather a back seat. The particular endeavour of the College is to give the students the best possible training in politics, as it is hoped that they will have a strong propagandist influence on their fellow countrymen; they are recruited mainly from the Eastern border states of Russia and include representatives of about fifty nationalities.

Both the Sverdlov University and the other workers' colleges sprang originally from courses in propaganda, instituted to give the workers a rapid knowledge of the actual problems of the day so that they could be sent as soon as possible to different places as emissaries of the Soviet authorities. At first, these courses lasted only for about a fortnight, and the subjects dealt with in the brief period were more or less determined haphazard by the events of the day.

But the impossibility of imparting any systematic knowledge to the students in so short a time made the directors of these courses gradually increase the period of instruction; with every fresh admission of students the period of study was extended. At first they had to rely on any chance offered lecturers; but later they succeeded in working out a regular programme of studies and in attaching a permanent staff of lecturers to the institution. But it continued to be the aim of these courses to train Soviet officials as quickly as possible for the rural districts, and they were, therefore,

divided into a section for communal officials and one for county officials. As early as 1919 the Sverdlov Institute had more than a thousand students whose term was three months; besides these regular students, there were a number of extraordinary ones, mainly recruited from soldiers on leave.

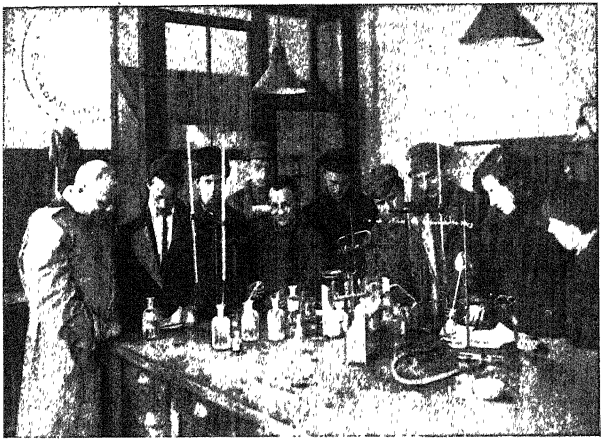
The Sverdlov University is attended by young and old, side by side, and almost all the students are members of the Communist Party. More than three-quarters of them have had some sort of education, though quite inadequate, previous to their entrance to the university, and can read and write; about five per cent. have never attended any school and have taught themselves to read. Moreover, there is a certain small percentage who have had a secondary education, and even a few students who have already graduated from a University and attend the Sverdlov University to improve their knowledge of national economy and Marxist social doctrine. A special group of students was formed for a time by a number of Cossacks, deserters from the counter-revolutionary army, who were being trained in special short courses to be good Bolsheviks.

As has already been stated, the Sverdlov University originated in the urgent need for communist officials with some sort of training; in the provinces, in the rural districts, at the front, in the trade unions and co-operative societies, trustworthy people, commissars, propagandists, and mandatories, were required to carry out the measures resolved upon in Moscow. The function of these first courses in propaganda was therefore to give some sort of instruction, however superficial, in order to train a few hundred agitators with the greatest possible speed. The further course of events showed the necessity of organizing the teaching systematically and of giving instruction in general subjects as well as in the problems of the moment, such as economic history, national economy, scientific socialism, and the history of the labour movement in Russia. The programme of teaching was divided into two sections, a theoretical and a practical, but the practical remained by far the more important. The " agitation section " is particularly interesting; there the students are instructed in oratory and all the branches of knowledge appertaining thereto. The principles of rhetoric are explained by examples, and the circumstances described in which the agitator will have to work and appear. Special value is attached to accustoming the students to speaking before various audiences. One student, for example, has to make a speech as if he were addressing peasants, another as if his audience were factory workers. The other members of the class keenly criticize and discuss these exercises, and the teacher points out their merits and defects; the external appearance and bearing of the speaker is also subjected to thorough inspection. At a more advanced stage of the course, discussions and arguments among the

ENROLMENT AT THE SVERDLOV UNIVERSITY IN MOSCOW

IN A "RED" STUDENTS' HOME

THE LECTURE ROOM OF A WORKERS' UNIVERSITY



CHEMISTRY LABORATORY AT THE SVERDLOV UNIVERSITY IN MOSCOW

students are arranged, and finally they are in a position to go out to factories and labour meetings, and there apply their talents in the practical service of Soviet propaganda.

Since 1919 seminars have also been held at the Sverdlov University in which specialized work is done. At these the students make independent reports and hold discussions, often without the co-operation of a teacher, since the teaching staff of the university is very small; in 1919 the number of lecturers was not more than eight.

Instruction at the Sverdlov University is entirely carried on without the system of lectures usual at all the other universities in the world; this system proved unsuited to the special aims of this institute. Most of the lecturers were unable to speak interestingly and clearly enough to enable the audience with their slight previous education to follow them, and therefore the whole principle of lectures was given up and replaced by practice in seminars and free discussion, which proved to be a considerable improvement.

One of the greatest difficulties in carrying on the college has always been the shortage of suitable teachers; at present an attempt is being made to remedy this by making the more advanced pupils share in the teaching. This method has the advantage of both keeping the students and the teachers in closer touch, and enabling the students of the highest classes, by giving instruction to the beginners, to ground themselves thoroughly again in fundamental subjects.

8

As it soon became apparent that many students lacked the necessary knowledge of geography and the natural sciences, it was found necessary to arrange introductory classes in these subjects, some of which had also to deal with the elementary problems of spelling and the first four rules of arithmetic; for it is necessary once again to call attention to the fact that the whole of the teaching of the communist university is ultimately nothing but a more or less intelligent memorizing and cramming, since inadequate education and the short term of study at the college make a really thorough treatment of the subjects taught absolutely impossible. The grotesqueness of the Russian ideas of the period necessary for scientific studies may best be seen from a few paragraphs from a publication of Nevski on the Sverdlov University:

" Comrade Lunacharski gives a very interesting course of lectures on the history of culture, with musical, dramatic, and other illustrations. The introductory course in physics and chemistry begins at the same time as the course on the history of culture; next a course

on physical geography and biology is held, in which special attention is devoted to the theory of evolution.

" In the second week begins the course on political economy, that is, on the theory and history of economic doctrine and national economy. These introductory courses also include one on general and Russian history, which serves as an introduction to the study of special subjects.

" A course on the class war and the history of revolutions in Western Europe begins in the fourth week, and in the fifth a similar course dealing with Russia.

" Instruction in statistics starts in the fifth week, and not till the seventh week, after the student has acquired a sufficient grounding in natural sciences, history, and political economy, does the course of scientific socialism begin.

" Only when they have received a solid preparation in the theory and history of Marxism are the students allowed to perfect their knowledge of this subject, in the seventh week, by the history of the peasant movement, in the eighth by the history of the Russian Communist Party, and in the tenth by the study of our Party programme. Finally, in the seventeenth week a short course is given on the programmes of other parties."

Students who have completed their course at the Sverdlov University are scattered over the whole country to put their newly acquired knowledge at the service of the Communist Party. During the civil war period, about four thousand students were enrolled in the Red Army, and, according to a statement of Trotski, did very valuable work of a propagandist and administrative-technical nature as well as military service.

However favourable the chances of the students may be when their term of study is over, since as trusty communists they enjoy preference everywhere, and since, in addition, the need of the State and the Party organization for officials with some sort of training is very urgent, they have by no means a pleasant life during their period of study. The many demands made on the students—attending classes, studying in seminars, activity in the Communist Party, and finally manual work in order to supply the college with the necessary commodities, leave them very little time to attend to their own livelihood. The scholarships given by the Government are very small and many of the students at the labour colleges earn a miserable, starveling living.

The students have set up a special employment exchange for daily jobs, which secures to needy students five or six days' manual work a month. During the Agricultural Exhibition in Moscow many students, men and women, acted as guides, porters, and

mechanics; at present many of them support themselves by selling cigarettes in the streets.

The Zinov'ev University at Leningrad pursues objects similar to those of the Sverdlov University at Moscow. It, too, originated in short courses and developed into a proletarian college. At present, in addition to courses in general education, a number of special subjects are dealt with; of these the section for criminology is of particular interest, its object is to attract communist police and legal officials. How superficial the work of this section also is may be seen with appalling clearness from the number of lectures given in the various branches:

	Number of lectures
Technique of criminology	24
Scientific technique for the investigation of criminal offences	24
Criminal law	22
Criminal law (second course)	13
Medical jurisprudence	10
Gymnastics and self-defence	40
Geography of Leningrad	5

It will be seen that in training the future law officers, the greatest importance is attached to gymnastics and self-defence; this subject has forty lectures devoted to it.

In addition to the professors of the State University, the chief lecturers at the Zinov'ev University are Party and Soviet officials, including Zinov'ev, Radek, and Bukharin. This institute is not used for general national education, but only for the training of instructors and Party officials.

9

Alongside of the newly founded labour colleges, the old universities of course still continued to exist, although in a considerably altered form. As already mentioned, the Soviet Government made a fundamental change in the programme of studies and in the constitution of the professoriate, and made great efforts to eliminate everything which might recall bourgeois traditions. All the universities were *ex officio* obliged to give exhaustive attention to Marxism, and in 1921 a decree was even issued which constrained every student, to whatever faculty he might belong, to attend certain classes in historic materialism, the elements of political economy, and the history of the labour movement.

The fight against idealistic philosophy, which led to the banish-

ment of all the chief teachers from the Russian universities, soon entailed a marked shortage of suitable professors. To remedy this a special " Institute for Red University Lecturers " was set up in 1921; its function was to train every year a larger number of communist teachers to teach history, political economy, philosophy, and sociology. The period of study at this institute, the conditions of admission to which are fairly strict in view of Russian conditions, is three years and is carried on in seminars, in which the pupils work independently and hold discussions under the guidance of the professors. After graduating from this institute, every student must do a year's practical work at a " Rabfak."

Since the shortage of teachers for elementary and middle schools and workers' colleges was also very marked, the Soviet authorities took a great interest in the establishment of educational training colleges and founded several new institutes of this kind. The most important of these is the " Humanistic Pedagogic Institute " at Moscow, whose function is to work out model programmes of study and methods of teaching for the elementary and middle schools, and to provide suitable literature and school books. Another more recent institute is mainly engaged in the training of male and female teachers. This is the " Academy for Social Education," which is also a techno-pedagogic institute and possesses a psychological pedagogic laboratory. The students are obliged to acquire a practical knowledge of various kinds of industrial work before they receive the necessary theoretical instruction. Here, too, the attempt to make instruction as practical as possible is apparent, and, for this purpose, to train the teachers of the future to be " pioneers " rather than humanists.

The " Marx and Engels Institute " is connected with the " Socialist Academy for Social Sciences " founded in 1919, which is mainly engaged in teaching history and the theory of socialism. The well equipped library of this institute contains very rare copies of socialist books and newspapers, as well as works on history, philosophy, and political economy. The Academy is divided into a large number of sections for the various branches of Marxist philosophy; public and private meetings are held in which the most important theoretical and practical problems are discussed. At the Marx and Engels Institute various scholars and specially qualified students are engaged in the work of editing and publishing works of pre-revolutionary Socialist literature. These were previously printed and circulated illegally, but are now to be made accessible to the masses in these new editions.

A review of the entire educational activity of the Bolsheviks shows that some remarkable work has been done. It is truly no trifle suddenly to make citizens able at least to read and write and under-

stand the first four rules of arithmetic out of a nation which vegetated in serfdom for centuries, and was mainly illiterate and given over to primitive superstition. It denotes a real merit on the part of the new régime that they have to some extent succeeded in their efforts.

But while duly appreciating these positive achievements, we must not overlook the fact that the whole of education in Soviet Russia does not aim, as in Western Europe, at the training of free individuals for a lofty human culture, but at creating as quickly as possible useful fighting troops for communism. They are not undertaking the education of a " great race of men worthy to stand with free people on free soil," but the breeding of an eternally subordinate *ecclesia militans* of agitators and Soviet bureaucrats, quite in the spirit of Metternich's reactionary system.

In this sense we may understand that the Bolsheviks have now so organized national education that no one may exceed the officially permissible allowance of knowledge and education, so that the subjects of the proletarian state may never run the risk of being stimulated to speculation by an improper amount of knowledge and of becoming " subversive " elements in the State.

Chapter XII

THE REFORMATION OF THE BYZANTINE CHURCH

I

BESIDES the castles and palaces of the nobles and rich bourgeoisie, other evidences of the age of the tsars persist in present-day Russia in the form of innumerable churches, which still bear the stamp of an antiquity once ruled by the spirit of feudalism and clericalism. But, while the nobles and the bourgeoisie were unable to withstand the revolutionary storm which swept them away, the organization of the Orthodox Church proved the strongest and most tenacious force of the old world, and its "liquidation" was a very difficult problem. The aristocracy and the capitalists could look for no support from the great masses of the population; but the Church had been deeply rooted for centuries in the thought and faith of whole classes of the Russian people, and any attack on it was, therefore, bound to arouse the strongest opposition among the masses, especially in the country districts.

It is true that this faith was not always the outcome of deep religious feeling, but often merely the result of the external effect of the magnificence of the religious ceremonies of the Church; nevertheless, the great majority of the population were unshakably attached to Orthodoxy, and were in no way inclined to break with their traditional customs.

Even the Bolsheviks soon had to realize this, and to make a compromise and adapt their policy to these conditions. "Although the Russian peasantry," writes the Bolshevik V. Stroev, "has never been deeply religious in the true sense of the word, they have never been able to get free of the ceremonial idea of faith. The peasants regarded the monasteries and churches, which occupied the finest squares in Russia, as their museums, their favourite places of pilgrimage; in the age of serfdom, when the estate owners treated both priests and peasants as cattle, they looked on the democratic priest as an older, better educated brother. Even after the abolition of serfdom this idea persisted for a long time, and it was only very gradually that the priest was transformed into the 'master of the flock.'"

But, while in the country districts the unity of the orthodox faith had not infrequently been disturbed by the rise of various sects, its authority was almost unquestioned in the bourgeois and feudal classes, apart from an insignificant minority of unbelievers and apostates. The reason for this was that these classes inevitably regarded the Church as the firmest foundation of their particular political and economic system.

In this respect, too, conditions in Russia before the Revolution were almost like those of mediaeval Europe, when the Church was identical with the State and was the true ideal foundation of temporal power. Thus the Revolution, if it really wished to make a clean sweep of the old régime, had to reckon with the Church. It could not be content with having overthrown the Tsar, the supreme symbol of temporal power; it had also to try to shatter the foundation on which the old Russian world was built.

But the Bolsheviks did not triumph in this struggle against the Church: its power proved too strong for it to fall an immediate victim to the attack of an energetic and ruthless, but still thin, line of revolutionaries.

For, although the attachment of the masses to their Church was often only external, although it consisted merely in the strict observance of, or partiality for, religious customs, yet it had during the centuries formed a tradition so strong that the power which could rely on that tradition was not confined to spiritual spheres, but could make itself strongly felt both economically and politically. Decrees and orders were not enough to eradicate this organization, even the most brutal use of force was not enough; nothing but patient, systematic, and logical work might perhaps be able, slowly, in the course of decades, first to shake and then to overthrow the ascendancy of the clergy.

The ineffectiveness of the Bolshevik attacks was soon apparent. They might place glass screens with anti-religious inscriptions before the churches; they might declare some of God's houses to be "museums of the civilization of past ages," and shut others; they might demand the surrender of church utensils and prosecute refractory priests; but none of these measures could effect a real destruction of the orthodox organization. The sole achievement of the Bolsheviks was a relaxation of the hierarchy and a split in the Church; but the process of disintegration for which this was preparing the way had for the moment no decisive results. The temporal authorities had still to discharge many difficult tasks before they could think of really "liquidating" this Church, in which the old State lived on.

2

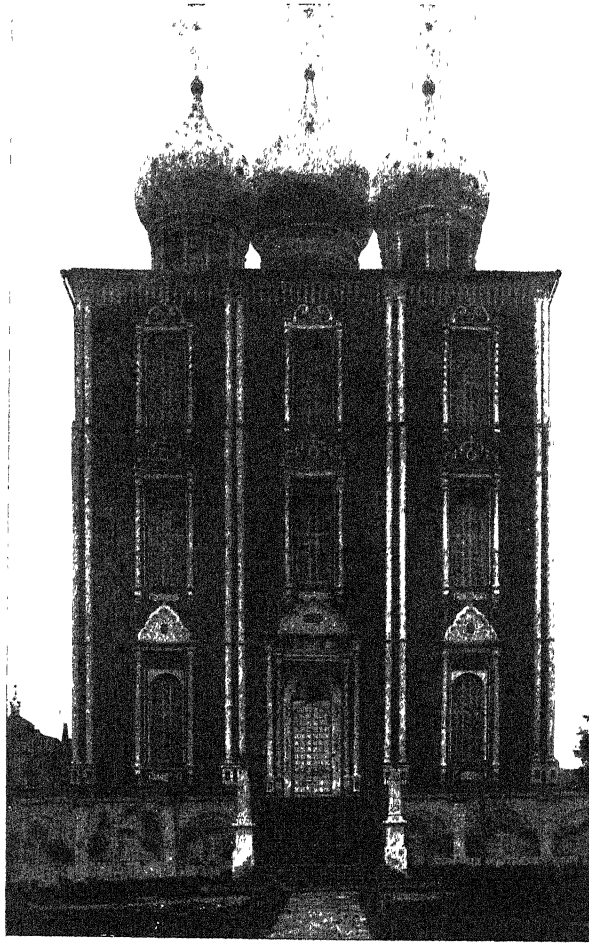
After the first impetuous attempts to destroy the Church had failed, and the Soviet leaders had been forced to recognize that a prohibition of all religious practices would merely result in embittering large sections of the people, they changed their tactics, and tried to overthrow the Church by an economic war against the clergy.

Lenin had, as early as 1905, in one of his books, laid down tactical directions for this policy of hostility to the Church. He declared that it was necessary to investigate carefully the meaning of Feuerbach's statement that, in the eyes of Socialists, religion was a private affair. " With regard to our own Party, we observe that religion should be a private affair. The State should not concern itself with it, and religious societies should have no connection with the political authorities. Everyone should be completely free to profess any religion or none, that is, to be an atheist, which is the case with most socialists. Distinctions in civil law connected with religious faith are entirely inadmissible; any mention of adherence to religion should unconditionally disappear from the official civic documents. There should be no State payments or taxes for Church or religious societies, since these should be unions of citizens of similar opinions entirely free and independent of the political authorities.

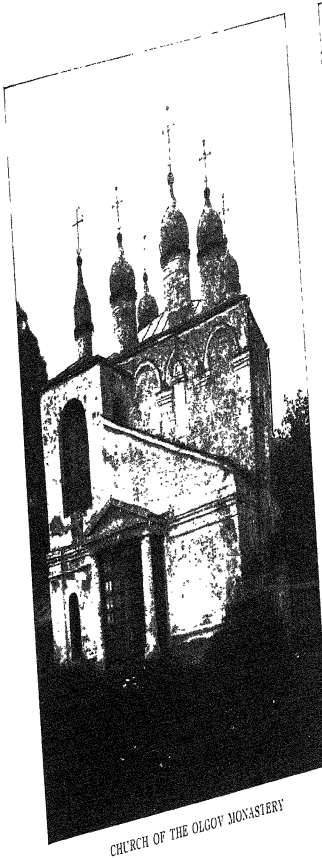
" Only the fulfilment of these conditions will make it possible to wipe out the shameful and accursed past, in which the Church was the slave of the State, and the Russian citizen, in his turn, the slave of the Church, when mediaeval inquisitorial laws tyrannized over the conscience of men, and the financial policy of the Church coincided with that of the State. Complete separation of Church and State, that is the demand which the Socialist proletariat makes both of State and Church.

" But although religion is a private affair, we ourselves, as members of our Party, cannot regard it in this light. Our Party is a union of conscious champions of the liberation of the working classes, and such a union may not and cannot adopt an attitude of indifference to the darkness and obscurity of religious creeds. We desire a complete separation of Church and State in order that we may be able to fight against the fog of religion with purely ideal weapons. For us the strife of ideas is not a private but a general proletarian question."

Bukharin, too, in his official " Communist Programme," drawn up at the beginning of the Revolution, put forward the same views as Lenin: he also described the programme of the Soviet Government on the Church question, and the reasons which made the Bolshevik war on religion necessary.



THE USPENSKI CATHEDRAL



CHURCH OF THE OLGOV MONASTERY

OLGOV MONASTERY IN THE RIASAN GOVERNMENT

" In the capitalistic social order," says Bukharin, " religion was a useful means of confusing the minds of the people. The bourgeoisie maintained their power, not only with the bayonet, but also by befogging the reason of their slaves. For this purpose they made use of a special organization, the Church, the true life-force of the State. The Church is in close relations with the police in almost all capitalistic countries; the parson is as much a State official as the hangman, the gendarme, or the police spy; he draws a salary for his work of poisoning the people. This is the most dangerous part of the whole affair: if such an enormous, strong, and powerful organization as that of the bourgeois State did not exist, the parsons could not maintain their position alone; they would soon be bankrupt. But the bourgeois State supports its Church administration with the whole of its resources, and the Church, in its turn, bolsters up the bourgeois authority with ardent zeal. In the time of the tsars, the Russian clergy not only deceived the masses, but even used the confessional to learn State secrets and to carry on espionage by the aid of their sacraments.

" All this logically leads to the communist programme for the Church: religion must be fought, but by conviction, not by force. The Church must be separated from the State. The parsons, bishops, metropolitans, patriarchs, abbots, and all the rest of the company must be deprived of all State support; the faithful may, if they like, with their own money, feed the holy fathers on salmon and sturgeon! The State must not support a clerical organization.

" In this respect the communist programme has already been put into force in Russia, and parsons of all kinds have lost their salaries. Therefore, they are mad with fury, and have cursed the present Government and excommunicated the communists. In the time of the tsars they were aware that it is written in Holy Scripture: ' There is no power but that of God,' and ' Obey those in authority.' Why have they forgotten their texts, when the authority is in the hands of the workers? The Soviet Government is the first Russian Government to touch the parsons in their most sensitive spot, their pockets. That is the great importance of the Revolution: it has freed humanity both from economic enslavement and from spiritual enslavement to the Church."

Thus the Soviet Government began by using all its resources to shake the economic position of the Church, in the hope that the removal of the material foundation would soon involve the disintegration of the spiritual power of the clergy. The religious communities were deprived by Government decrees of all property rights; the Church estates were declared to be national property, and religious instruction in the schools was strictly forbidden.

If we are to form a correct estimate of the importance of these

enactments, we must keep in mind the former economic position of the Russian Church: it had more than sixty dioceses with nineteen archbishoprics, forty-one thousand livings, ninety-eight monasteries, fifty-eight thousand monks, nuns, and lay brothers; it possessed eighty-four factories, more than four hundred dairy farms, six hundred cattle farms, eleven hundred houses let out, seven hundred hotels and inns, eight hundred and forty thousand dessiatins of land, and over seven millions of gold roubles. The nationalization of this enormous property provided the Government with considerable funds, all the more as they did not even except the Church treasures. These expropriations were, for reasons of policy, not placed to the immediate credit of the State or even the Party, but were used for the relief of the hungry; in this way the Government contrived to make any clamorous opposition impossible.

Where this course seemed suitable, the authorities handed over the confiscated religious objects on lease for the further use of the parish, but with certain restrictions, including a demand that every religious community must include at least twenty members. Churches whose parishes could not produce twenty members and also those under a priest who was known to engage in counter-revolutionary activities were closed by the authorities, and some were turned into workshops or club and living rooms.

3

This attack on the economic power of the clergy and on the material prosperity of the priesthood did in fact lead to a considerable weakening of the organization of the Church, so that it was increasingly threatened with the danger of dissolving into a number of small mutually hostile sects.

Ever since the great split in the Church in the year 1054 the Byzantine Church had contrived for nearly ten centuries to maintain almost untouched its traditional constitution and doctrine. While Roman Catholicism was completely reformed in the sixteenth century, and has since had frequently to compromise with modernist tendencies, the Greek Orthodox Church obstinately rejected all reforms and innovations. Its bishops and priests until quite recently still resembled, even in externals, the old saints on the wooden ikons.

It is true that, in the Orthodox Church, attempts were made earlier to carry out changes and reforms in the canon; but these were mainly directed towards the restoration of the Patriarchate, which had been in abeyance since the time of Peter the Great. Before the first Russian Revolution attempts at reform of this kind were again made, and even the Tsar, the head of the Church, was

at one time prepared to grant the repeated petitions of the Holy Synod for the summoning of a Council. But the political confusion of the next few years prevented these plans from being carried out, and nothing more was done in the time of the tsars.

It was not till the Church Congress at Moscow, in 1917, that reformist tendencies again made themselves felt; but they had no success. The clergy tried on this occasion, too, to maintain the tutelage of the Church over the State, and this caused the Government to dissolve the Congress after a brief session. The oppositions and differences of opinion among the clergy thus received no further expression; but they became more profound and went on fermenting in the parishes.

The reformist trend did not take concrete shape until the Soviet Government came into power. At first the Church vigorously opposed all the measures of the Government, for their sympathies, naturally enough, were on the side of the régime which had been overthrown. The Patriarch protested against Bolshevik dominion and cursed it in all its forms. At the same time the high spiritual powers frequently engaged in counter-revolutionary propaganda, and, in 1918, the princes of the Church resolved to excommunicate all persons who had aided in enforcing Bolshevik decrees. The priesthood were openly exhorted in circulars to defend the Church against Bolshevism with all their might.

This attitude of the clergy was mainly due to the influence of the Patriarch Tikhon, who refused at any price to give up the supremacy of the Church over the State. But soon a group of priests with reformist views came into power in clerical circles; they supported an adjustment of the Church to existing conditions and an understanding with the Soviet Government.

These men regarded the separation of Church and State as the beginning of a religious revival, the liberation of the Church from the temporal functions so alien to its nature. The orders of the Soviet Government were eagerly welcomed as the "saving of the Church from the fetters of Imperial papacy." These reformers believe that the oppression of the feudal monarchist order has affected the priesthood as well as the laity, and that the clerical hierarchy has been an obstacle to the free development of the Church.

A section of the partisans of this movement for Church reform have gone farther in adapting themselves to Soviet rule; at the "All Russian Congress of the Living Church," in the year 1922, an appeal was issued, which stated that the Church in Russia had come more and more to serve political ends and less and less religious ends. "The spiritual powers in town and country, the clergy and the congregations, were under the domination of the power of the Tsar

and the capitalists. The Churches, it is true, glittered with splendour; but they had lost their soul, and become more and more incapable of bringing comfort and peace to the weary and heavy laden. The Revolution, by the separation of Church and State, has restored to us freedom for spiritual development, much against the will of the great princes of the Church, whose comfort and prosperity were closely bound up with the power of the Tsar.

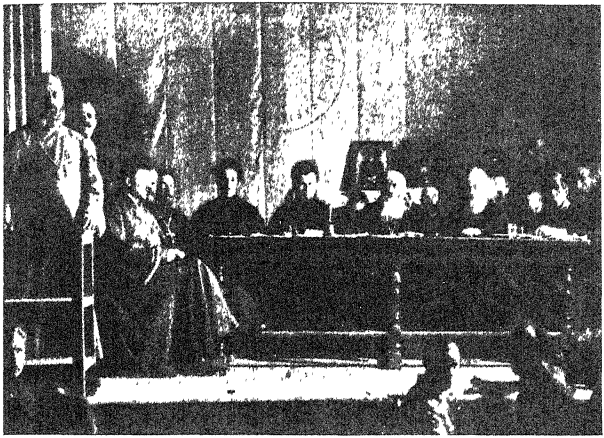
"Although the majority even of the high spiritual powers, long before the outbreak of the Revolution, had recognized the inevitability and justice of these things, nevertheless our hierarchies allied themselves with the enemies of the Russian people, and were preparing a new civil war. These grievous facts exhausted our patience, and forced us to take the only possible way, to rebuild the true Church on the foundation of the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. This great work is the task of our movement and preparation for it, the object of this Congress."

The "Living Church," therefore, turned its energies to making peace with the Government and bringing Orthodox Church ideology into harmony with the ideals of the working classes and the peasantry. This movement, in many of its aspects, reminds one strongly of the German reformation of Martin Luther, not least in the attempt to base the Church entirely on the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles.

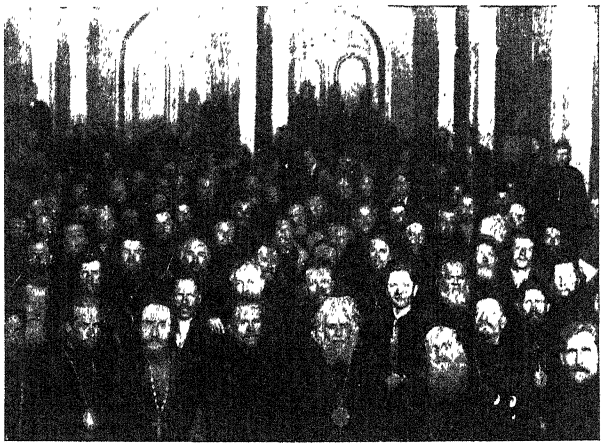
Besides the Living Church many other movements, which have arisen among the clergy in the last few years, are pursuing ideas of this kind. Vedenski, one of the leaders of the new Russian reformation, has declared that capitalism is an untruth that should be rejected, and that all use made by one Christian of another, all distinction between nobles and commoners, are to be utterly condemned in accordance with the commandments of Christ. Many priests have attempted to add Church festivals to the celebration of the revolutionary May Day festival, and for this purpose they went the length of preparing banners which bore the figure of the Saviour in the midst of revolutionary mottoes.

4

V. Stroev, who has an intimate knowledge of Church conditions, has given an interesting account of the rise and progress of this split among the clergy. In May 1922 a group of priests, led by Vedenski, approached the Patriarch Tikhon; they drew attention to the lawsuit before the Moscow Revolutionary Tribunal, which had pronounced eleven death sentences for resistance to the confiscation of Church property, and they made the Patriarch morally responsible for this bloodshed. In the opinion of the clergy, Tikhon, in one of his proclamations, had given the signal for a rebellion against the Soviet



THE LEADERS OF THE " ALL-RUSSIAN CHURCH COUNCIL "



PRIESTS AT THE " ALL-RUSSIAN CHURCH COUNCIL "

BISHOP ANTONIN, HEAD OF THE "APOSTOLIC CHURCH"

KRASNITSKI, THE REFORMER OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

authority. The priest Krasnitski reproached the Patriarch with his counter-revolutionary attitude in openly anathematizing the Soviet Government and appealing for the concealment of the treasures of the Church; he accused Tikhon of having filled the highest offices with partisans of monarchism, extreme reactionary elements, who were trying to overthrow the power of the Soviets under the protection of the Church. The Church had forfeited its authority by this counter-revolutionary policy, and it was, therefore, absolutely necessary to make a complete change of front at a General Congress and to suspend the Patriarch from office.

The pressure of this ever-increasing protestant movement actually forced Tikhon to resign, and to transfer his authority to another hierarch; a new form of Church administration was immediately established, represented chiefly by the bishops, Leonid and Antonin, and the priests, Kalinovski and Krasnitski. But the proceedings of this provisional Church administration soon led to vigorous opposition both among the clergy and the laity. Numerous circulars and proclamations cautioned the people against those in authority in the Church, and an open break was announced. Thus the split in the Russian Orthodox Church was complete, the unity of administration shattered, and the reformation made a reality.

The extent of the revolutionary aims of the Living Church may be seen from the programme of the congress which was held at Moscow in 1922. There, such questions were discussed as the recognition of the social revolution, the purification of the Church from reactionary elements, the dissolution of the monasteries, the abolition of celibacy, the reformation of Church services, examination of all Church doctrine, and the marriage laws.

Naturally, this growing reformist tendency was very welcome to the Government; though it continually declared emphatically that it was in no way concerned with religious differences, it was really strongly in sympathy with the reformist movement.

The masses, too, not only in the priesthood, but among the whole population, were greatly interested in these events, and thus it came about that, in the midst of all the communist attempts at mechanization, while everything was being systematically organized, the attention of the whole public was all at once diverted to a subject which was thought to be settled long ago. In 1923, when the Bolshevik prophets were zealously proclaiming the dawn of the machine age, it became suddenly clear that the bishops and priests in their long stoles with their waving hair and white beards were at the very heart of public sympathy.

Old problems, long thought to be over and done with, were revived: there were discussions about God, the Gospels, the Creed,

and the sacred ceremonies just as in the days of the Council at Nicaea. For weeks on end bishops, archimandrites, and monks sat in the old building of the Patriarchate at Moscow debating with excited words and gestures. Before the ikonstasis of the Church of the Apostles, magnificently adorned with gold and malachite, a pulpit was erected, from which grey-haired bishops with the white cylinder-shaped *tamilaichon* on their heads, preached to the priesthood, and exhorted them to persevere steadfastly in the old faith. Then young presbyters, with short hair and ordinary civilian clothes, would rise, and beg the congregation to aid in the fundamental renewal of the Church and the true faith. All these debates took place amid lively public sympathy, for they dealt with a decisive problem for the Russian Church, which was bound to arouse the liveliest interest in all the faithful.

Although Russia had possessed an independent Patriarchate since the year 1589, a certain contact with the patriarchates of Constantinople, Jerusalem, and Alexandria had nevertheless been maintained: the whole Oriental Church had always been in agreement with regard to the fight for predominance in Europe, which was directed mainly against Roman Catholicism. The Popes had never entirely given up their plan for reuniting the whole Christian Church; Innocent the Third, scarcely a hundred and fifty years after the beginning of the split in the Church, made attempts in this direction, and, ever since, this has always continued to be the great task of Vatican policy.

Bolshevism in Russia appeared to bring Roman Catholicism appreciably nearer to a fulfilment of its desires, for it has won many new adherents in that country, especially since the economic reorganization of the Russian Church. The lower ranks of the clergy had had to endure many material difficulties; even earlier, in the time of the tsars, there were examples of priests with a monthly income of from three to five roubles; but it was the decrees of the Soviet Government that made the material position of the priesthood quite intolerable. A section of the clergy hopes, by reunion with the Roman Church, both to improve their material position and strengthen their political power.

The Vatican, which had long known of the impending bankruptcy of the Orthodox Church, contrived most skilfully and diplomatically to take many cautions and imperceptible steps to gain a footing in Russia. In this connection, we may recall the numerous conversations which took place between Chicherin and the Cardinal of Genoa at the time of the Genoa Conference. Thus, it might quite easily happen that the propaganda of the Soviet Government against the Church may ultimately bring about the ruin of the Byzantine Church only to replace it by Roman Catholicism.

5

The disintegration of the Orthodox Church was further hastened by personal enmities which arose between individual hierarchs: the Patriarch Tikhon had tried to appoint monks to all the higher offices of the Church in order to dislodge the secular priests. But the latter regarded monasticism, with its alienation from life, as a distortion of the Christian idea, and finally openly declared the Patriarch and his adherents to be the " offspring of Antichrist."

The differences steadily deepened, and increasing numbers of priests grouped themselves round the reformer Krasnitski, who more and more came to be called in Russia the " Luther of the Byzantine Church." Krasnitski fought monasticism in all its forms with the utmost energy, and preached that the true Christian must be connected with the world, and allow scope for human love, instead of sacrificing it to the alleged higher love of God. His propaganda was very successful, and led among other things to the withdrawal of many priests from the religious orders.

The Living Church is also attempting to reform the archbishopric; it wants to permit its priests to marry a second time, which, so far, has been strictly forbidden, and it intends to reform clerical garb. The priests of the New Church wear short hair and European civilian clothes, instead of the customary flowing hair and time-honoured cassocks. As regards ritual, the Living Church has left the old customs alone, and has not disturbed the Church-slavonic and traditional form of the liturgy.

In contrast to this, the adherents of the " Old Apostolic Church," known as the " Church Bolsheviks," demand a complete reform of the liturgy, a total abolition of all ceremonies, the removal of the altar and the pictures of the saints, and sermons in the everyday language.

In opposition to these two reformist groups, the party of " Church Renaissance " takes its stand as the guardian of the old forms; it does, it is true, for propagandist purposes, demand certain reforms in the liturgy; but in its inmost heart it desires to maintain tradition. The leader of this group is the Metropolitan Antonin, a monk, who, with his followers, in spite of the alterations in the liturgy demanded by them, are regarded as the extreme Right group in the reform movement.

At the last Church Congress in Moscow, a formal union between these reformist parties was arrived at, and a joint administration introduced, so that it almost seemed as if peace were going to be permanent. But, even then a conflict was inevitable, and it came very soon; the adherents of the Living Church accused the

Metropolitan Antonin of partiality and forced him to resign his office as head of the united reformed Churches. Antonin went back to the monastery of Don, and lives there as an ordinary monk. The numerically weak group of the Church Renaissance has withdrawn from the reformed faith, which now consists only of the two parties, the Living Church and the Old Apostolic Church.

Finally, they proceeded to a new election of the supreme authorities, which this time was called by the old name of the "Holy Synod." The new reformist synod has recently been extremely active, has reopened the secondary and higher religious schools, and gets on tolerably well with the Soviet Government.

But the reactionary party among the clergy has not yet given up the game, and is developing an energetic propagandist activity. Even in the lifetime of Tikhon, who took up residence in the monastery at Don, his followers created a strong organization and opened a theological academy. At present, the "Tikhonists" are warring against the "Reformists"; Antonin, since his removal from office, has been hostile to both parties, and demands that, in future, not the priesthood, but the congregations themselves shall have the decisive voice in all Church affairs.

It is not surprising that this schism in the Church has not been without effect on the religious community. Many priests even maintain that the dispute in the Church has aroused greater sympathy in the population which, in the time of the tsars, was fairly indifferent to internal Church affairs. The older people mostly support the retention of the orthodox customs; but the young men, especially the workers, if they do not belong to the anti-religious movement, are in favour of a reformation.

The attitude of the priesthood and the parish authorities varies very greatly: some dioceses openly support the old Church, while others work for reformation and friendly relations with the State authorities. Even in the towns there is a fairly lively interest in religious problems, and the meetings at which the representatives of the various parties in the Church carry on debates are now well attended by the intellectual public. This lively interest of the masses shows clearly that religious problems have been by no means banished by the bolshevizing of the State, and that they continue as always to touch the Russian people very deeply.

Chapter XIII

THE REBIRTH OF RUSSIAN MYSTICISM

I

JUST as the Bolsheviks were scarcely successful in eliminating the traditional external manners and customs of the Russian people, and just as they met with great opposition in their war against the political and economic power of the Church, so, too, they found it almost impossible to overcome the idea of orthodoxy, which is very deeply rooted in the people, being, in fact, the Russian idea itself. What orthodoxy means to the true Russian, we may learn from the famous "formula" of Dostoevski, who had the most profound knowledge of the Russian nature:

"The Russian people live entirely in orthodoxy and in the idea of it. Outside orthodoxy, there is nothing in them; they have nothing and need nothing, for orthodoxy is everything; it is the Church and the Church is the crown of the edifice, and that to all eternity.... No one who does not understand orthodoxy will ever understand the Russian people. Nay more: he can never even love the Russian people; at the best he will love an imaginary people, such as he desires to see in the Russian. And, on the other hand, the people will never recognize such a man as one of themselves: If you love not that which I love, believe not that which I believe, and honour not that which is sacred to me, you are not my brother. ... The people will listen quietly to the man who wants to see them other than they are, if he is clever and a good speaker; they will even thank him for the advice and the knowledge he brings them; they may even follow much of his advice, for they are magnanimous and can make distinctions. But they will never regard him as their equal, never give him their hand or their heart...."

From early times the Russian monasteries with their sacred institution, the Elders, have been regarded as the purest guardian of the true Russian idea, Orthodoxy. The ascetic life of these Elders and their teaching and judgments were looked upon as the earthly

expression of the ultimate divine wisdom, the revelation of the one true Christian doctrine.

Many of these monks were revered as saints by the people; N. Bogdanov tells us that thousands of pilgrims used to crowd to these wise men to ask their advice in emergencies both great and small. It was not only the simple peasants, arriving at the gates of the monastery in their patched coats and with a bundle on their backs who were regular guests of the Elders, highly educated and intellectual men thought good to beg for instruction from these devout monks. Distinguished Russian minds like Gogol', the Kireevski brothers, and Dostoevski, not only took the keenest interest in the apparently simple teachings of the Elders, but also bowed to the moral authority of these wise men. The monks of the Optina Pustin' monastery, in particular, were famed for lofty understanding, and it was they who most strongly influenced the Kireevski brothers, who were the literary representatives of Slavophilism. In spite of their high intellectual powers, these two men always turned to the Elders of Optina Pustin' when they were seeking a solution of tormenting spiritual questions.

Gogol"s connection with this monastery also lasted till the end of his life; his enthusiastic accounts of the customs of this religious Order show clearly the strength of their influence over him. Finally, Dostoevski, in his novel, *The Brothers Karamazov*, erected an immortal literary monument to the Russian Elder, and made the nature of the institution known to the whole world. He often paid personal visits to the Russian monasteries, and especially to Optina Pustin', if he could not by himself resolve any of his doubts. In the figure of the *Starets* Zosima in *The Brothers Karamazov*, Dostoevski has given us a portrait of the wise monk Ambrosius, for there can be no question that Ambrosius is one of the personalities in the intellectual life of Russia who have had the greatest influence on the whole cultural development of the country.

The honourable tradition of the Eldership in the Russian monasteries was maintained with undiminished vigour up to the time of the Revolution, and contrived to survive even that upheaval with no great loss of strength. While civil war was waging, crowds of destitute people poured in to beg for the advice of the " wise old men "; all the attempts of the Communist authorities to put an end to this tradition and to cure the simple people of their " delusion " by means of " meetings for enlightenment," were practically fruitless. The great mass of the population continued unmoved to believe in the teaching of the Elders, and to regard the monasteries as the refuge of truth, and were for the most part impervious to communist enlightenment.

Finally, the Bolsheviks resorted to force and closed some of the

most famous monasteries. The sacred books and writings of the monks, with their mysterious prophecies and marvellous sayings, were confiscated and placed in museums, the monks were scattered and robbed of their livelihood. But not even this attempt to "liquidate" by force one of the oldest orthodox institutions succeeded in breaking the spiritual power of the Eldership and its monasteries. Officially, of course, pilgrimages ceased; but countless believers continued to come secretly to the exiled monks living in poverty and retirement, for the spiritual power of Orthodoxy was increased by this brutal suppression of all the external forms of religion. It was then, when all religious usages were persecuted by the State, that the faith of the nation began to develop, to be sublimated and to become more and more a spiritual power, which might lead to a new intellectual culture in Russia.

The writings of one of the last "Great Elders," the dead monk Serapion Maskin, were studied with special reverence, and the people maintained that these contained prophecies and saving instructions which directly applied to the present godless epoch. Anyone who has gained any insight into the real spiritual constitution of Soviet Russia knows that more people adhere, even though it be secretly, to the sacred revelations of the *Starets* Serapion than believe in the dogmas of historic materialism. It is not only the masses, who at first joined the ranks of Bolshevism in the hope of a millennium and later in their disillusion turned all the more passionately to the old religion; the majority of the intelligentsia is also flocking back to Orthodoxy.

Even young people who have completed their education at the Bolshevik schools and the Red University, who have, that is, been educated entirely in a materialistic spirit, frequently adopt the revived faith in the Church. Just as formerly the great emphasis laid on religious teaching in the schools drove the young to free thinking and atheistic convictions, so now young people who have been educated on materialistic lines are largely turning to religious mysticism. The wholly unsuccessful educational system of the Bolsheviks may one day recoil on itself, for this materialistically drilled, younger generation will later produce the most reactionary partisans of Orthodoxy.

Under the dictatorship of materialism, the most strict rules of the Orthodox Church are bound to be felt to be the ideal condition for the human soul and spirit. Anyone who has had an opportunity to become acquainted with the sentiments of the younger generation in Russia, that section, that is, which has been able to get free of the communist clubs and associations, knows that the current is already setting against materialism, and that the longing for the old bonds of the Orthodox Church is flaming with increasing ardour, for,

compared with the much harsher slavery of Bolshevik materialism, these must seem like freedom itself.

Perhaps it will not be long before the protest against materialism, which is already apparent beneath the surface, will lead to a new spiritual revolution, to a renaissance of Orthodoxy. The faith in the Christianity of the Elders, driven out from the old monasteries, has built its new " invisible temple " in the hearts of all Russians who are sick of the enslavement to materialism; robbed of its earthly sphere of influence, Orthodoxy has become a mystical movement, which has far more followers than could be imagined from external signs.

2

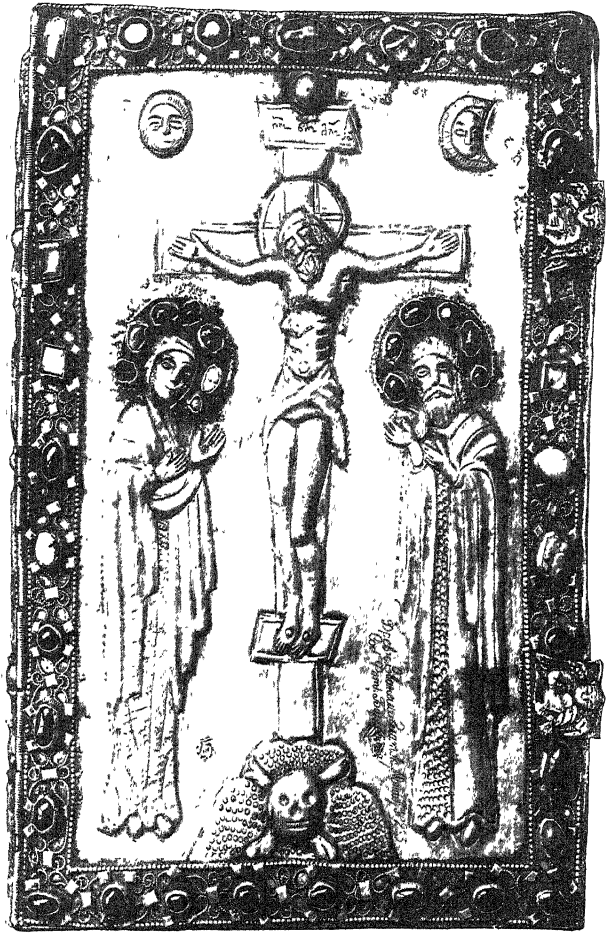
Although this anti-materialistic movement is at present split up into many schools and groups, which differ on important points, they are all united in an invisible central point, belief in the Russian Orthodox faith; they have all the same aim, though they try to reach it in different ways, the restoration of the soul, the living revival of the true orthodox faith.

Among the most important of these tendencies is the " Onomatodoxy," the " Imiaslaviia " movement, to which a great part of the intelligentsia, as well as a considerable part of the peasants, belong. The best men of Russia lead this school, which proclaims the magic power of the divine name; it is from the spread of its religious doctrines that the true revival of Russian religion is generally expected.

The Imiaslaviia movement, whose mission it is to overthrow Bolshevik materialism and give a new religion to the Russia of the future, draws its strength from a mystical branch of the Byzantine faith, and is striving from this source to re-establish Orthodoxy. The doctrines of the Imiaslaviia group are really of an orthodox-gnostic character, and link up with the view of the Being of God and its relation to the Word, which formed the subject of the Chiliast controversy at Byzantium in the fourteenth century. The supporters of this idea proclaim themselves to be the successors of this old Byzantine school.

The Imiaslaviia movement started in the year 1913, within the Orthodox Church, in the monastery of Saint Panteleimon on Mount Athos, where a monk Hilarion proclaimed for the first time, in a book called *In the Mountains of the Caucasus*, the doctrine, which sprang originally from the Jewish Kabbala, that the " name " of God must be worshipped as such. Hilarion's book consists of dialogues between a younger and an older monk. In the course of the discussion the older monk communicates to his pupil the prayer

A " STARETS "
(old Russian painting)



COVER OF AN ANCIENT TESTAMENT

of the publican in the Gospel after the boasting of the Pharisee. This prayer, "God be merciful to me, a sinner" (Luke xviii, 13), had for long been very popular among the monks of the Mount Athos monastery and also with the rest of the Russian abbots.

These words are repeated in the heart several hundred times by supplicants with closed eyes, either standing or sitting and with or without genuflections. They are called "a weapon against Satan," and every monk belonging to this school is bound to perform the "Jesus prayer" in the prescribed ways, and thus strive to reach union with God through the name of the Lord. The hesychiasts, the quietists of the fourteenth century, adhered to this doctrine, and Gregorius Palama, Bishop of Thessalonia, did much to propagate it. But even then the monks disputed whether the light from the hill of Tabor, which shone at the Transfiguration of Christ, and also that which the monks and other believers perceive during the "Jesus prayer," when all their thoughts are concentrated to the utmost, and there is nothing in the soul of the supplicant but this communicable divine light, whether this light is God Himself and betokens His presence, or whether it is not a light created by God and thus neither God Himself nor His energy.

It is clear that two fundamental tendencies of human thought are clashing here, subjective psychologism on the one hand, and a strictly critical objectivism on the other.

At the Church Council at Byzantium in the year 1351, a compromise was finally arrived at. According to this, the light from the hill of Tabor was to be regarded as uncreated, but, at the same time, not to be held to be the substance, the essence of God Himself; it is incomprehensible and inaccessible to the creature; but, on the other hand, the energies of the essence can be comprehended by the grace of God and communicated to the creature. The light from the hill of Tabor, the perceptible light of the essence of God, is the energy of the essence, which is inseparable from it, and therefore God Himself.

The hesychiasts have worked out a whole system to elucidate the degrees of inner absorption over the intellectible "Jesus prayer." The "breast prayer" must follow the oral prayer, then comes the intellectible and finally the "heart prayer." At first, while the thoughts are still scattered and concentration still incomplete, the name of God is revealed in the word; later the larynx, breast, and heart are gradually penetrated by it. As soon as the heart begins to pray, the supplicant falls into a state of intellectible ecstasy and the whole personality takes part in the prayer with every heart beat and every breath.

The hesychiasts also instructed their pupils on the way to breathe during prayer, for one of the most important achievements of the

prayer is complete harmony with the breath, which later makes possible complete harmony with the heart beat. Everything intellectible then joins to form a lofty unity; all images and thoughts are extinguished and the divine name shines brightly in the innermost part of the supplicant with an all-embracing flame and power.

These very remarkable theories of onomatodoxy were forced increasingly into the background in the course of Byzantine Church controversies, and were finally almost entirely forgotten. It was only in the monasteries of Mount Athos that they were to continue through the centuries to live a secret life, as on a lost island on the ocean, until they were once again revived in Russia as the Imiaslaviia movement (mainly as a result of the book by Hilarion, the monk of Athos already referred to, *In the Mountains of the Caucasus*), attaining in this form unexpected popularity and influence over people's minds.

Hilarion, in his book, explained the " Jesus prayer " entirely in accordance with the orthodox interpretation, but added the new idea that the word itself possesses magical power, and that the name of God, when uttered, is God Himself. Thus, if anyone invokes the name of the Lord in prayer, he, by this act, becomes united with God Himself. Every prayer must, therefore, be repeated until the name of God becomes the reality of God.

Hilarion's book immediately gave rise to fierce controversy in the Church. To begin with, the monk Chrysanthos vigorously opposed Hilarion's views, and soon a general Church controversy flared up, in the course of which impassioned scenes took place. The monks who were opposed to the Imiaslaviia doctrine took a piece of paper, and wrote the name of God on it; then they tore it up, trampled on it, and declared that it was impossible that this piece of paper could be God, because in that case He would never have permitted such conduct.

The majority of the learned religious fathers also took sides against Hilarion; finally a meeting of the Synod was summoned, which excommunicated all the supporters of onomatodoxy in the Russian monasteries. The supporters of the movement opposed to the Imiaslaviia took the name of the " Imiaborchestvo "; they represented the equally cabalistic view that the name of God must not be taken in vain, because man had no right to express the inexpressible. Hilarion's pupils replied that the name of God is not merely a word, but rather represents a power, a part of God Himself which cannot be separated from God.

But it was not till the Imiaslaviia monks at Athos migrated to Russia that the real controversy blazed up. Anton Bulatovich composed a *Defence of the Faith in the Name of Jesus*, a systematic work with numerous quotations from the patristic writers, to justify

the Imiaslaviia ideas. The famous Moscow priest and philosopher Florenski, who was later to be the real leader of this spiritual movement, also published works of a similar kind. The excommunicated Athos monks came to Moscow, and propagated their ideas from there. For a long time they were persecuted, but later they were pardoned, and even allowed to hold Church services; some of them were even able to resume friendly relations with the patriarchate.

This orthodox gnostic controversy, on a seemingly purely formal problem, was to form the starting point of one of the greatest spiritual movements in the new Russia. For, later, the doctrine of the Imiaslaviia group was no longer confined to the meaning of the name of God; it aimed at a spiritual justification of Orthodoxy in all its aspects, and thus to some extent forms the foundation of the new religious movement to which Russia looks to-day for a revival of its culture.

3

Another attempt to derive the spiritual rebirth of Russia from the religious depths of orthodoxy is also closely allied to onomatodoxy: that is, the revival of the old doctrine of Fëdorov on the "true collectivity." This was previously known only to few, but it flamed up anew under the "materialistic dictatorship" of the Bolsheviks, spread widely, and now holds a large part of the Russian clergy under its spell. As every non-materialistic movement in Russia is subject to ruthless persecution, all these tendencies can, of course, only develop clandestinely, and their adherents can only meet in secret conventicles.

The main idea of Fëdorov's doctrine is the conception of a "world organism" or a "multiple unity." The function of life, according to this theory, consists in the gradual uniting of the "multiplicity," which is torn apart in separate individuals, in a "multiple unity"; this "multiple unity," however, is not an association of individual beings mechanically arranged side by side, but a collectivity in which the notions of "myself" and "other people" must be replaced by "we" and "all," and "all" must feel and recognize themselves in "all," so that there is absolutely no distinction between "friend" and "foe," "intimate" and "stranger."

According to Fëdorov's teaching, the real human "multiple unity," which consists of the feeling of inner kinship, signifies a true reality, compared to which all other principles which result from theoretical considerations are mere chimeras. Humanism, therefore, is a completely false conception, since it can be nothing but "an abstraction from true reality, an artificial generalization in the mind,"

whereas true kinship represents " a natural inner tie," which is involuntarily felt to be organic. The idea of humanistic progress is quite inconsistent with the organic principle of " multiple unity ": the essence of progress is the denial of filial relationship, and is equivalent to a condemnation of fathers; " down with fathers " is the motto of all progressive theories in complete opposition to the ancient formula, " Honour your father." In Fëdorov's view, the " child of nature " of Rousseau is the antithesis of that Gospel child which forms the most perfect expression of human unity through filial relationship. But kinship, that is, filial relationship and the true brotherhood which results, is the only element of human association which is all-penetrating and all-embracing.

Another movement which aims at a spiritual revival is based mainly on the ideas of Solov'ëv. This philosopher in his lifetime had himself preached the strengthening and preserving of Orthodoxy by a renaissance of orthodox doctrine, and believed that the true faith could be assured by a union of all the churches. He regarded humanity as a uniform organism predestined for a universal Church; to him every individual was a member of the Church and the State and existed only as such. Economic society was merely a means to the organization of labour, while the Church was the spiritual society; in his view, law belonged to the State, but not love, while the Church should be the organization of piety. The life of the Church and the truth of the Church have nothing to do with science or philosophy, but are simple life, living piety in the sense of religious dogmas. True spiritual freedom, equality, and fraternity are to be realized in the Church, not through the individual, but through Christ. " The principle of the spiritual life does not exist of itself," says Solov'ëv, " and, therefore, the world needs a Church and a religious hierarchy. In the Church and through the Church humanity is united with Christ; the priesthood are the personal representatives of moral organization and supreme piety." Solov'ëv desired to see the office of prophet restored, because the prophet by his complete independence of all external influences enjoys absolute freedom such as no democracy can guarantee; the picture of the future as painted by the prophet is not a personal Utopia, but arises from the needs of society and has its roots in the mysterious traditions of religion.

4

The fourth non-materialistic tendency in Russia, the " Eurasia " movement, though also based on Orthodoxy, has a more political and national tinge. Its most important leaders are distinguished scholars, philosophers, writers, and other intellectuals, who are at

present mostly living in exile on account of their anti-materialistic views. But the Eurasia movement can boast of a great, though secret, following among the intelligentsia even in Russia itself; it can look back on a long history in Russian spiritual life; it is as old as the efforts at Europeanization which it seeks to combat. This school was, therefore, from the very beginning strongly marked by patriotic Slavophil, national-mystical, and religious tendencies, by all the characteristics which have always opposed the Westernizing of Russia. Its two chief motives are still the fight against Europe and the attempt to attain greater religiousness.

The reaction against the West really began, as the writings of the Eurasians show, with the split in the Church in the time of the Patriarch Nikon, and was continued in the sect of the Old Believers, who held with fanatical devotion to the traditional and, therefore, sacred formal errors in the Holy Scriptures. They had proved themselves in active and passive resistance to Peter the Great, a resistance which really had never ceased up to the time of the Revolution. The attempts to Russianize the literary language at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Slavophilism of the 'thirties and 'forties, and the pan-Slavist political second blooming of the second half of last century, all this is part of the special tradition of spiritual conservatism of the " Eurasians " in Russia.

The Eurasia movement appeared as a definite system for the first time in 1909, when the review *Vekhi* (*The Boundary Posts*) was published and caused a regular storm in Russian society. It reproached the westward-leaning intelligentsia with the fact that they had tried to transplant to Russia only one branch of the tree of European culture, which in the West was nourished by the spiritual sap of old religious roots; it was, therefore, not surprising that this branch, torn from its roots, was unable to thrive, and, in alliance with Russian Tatardom, was leading to revolution and other dissensions. If they really wanted to transplant Western culture, they must go deeper and seek to achieve a " historically conscious Westernism."

Whereas, therefore, spiritual conservatism in the time of the tsars was mainly directed against the outbreaks of a falsely conceived Westernism which had appeared among the intelligentsia, the spiritual counter-revolution of the Eurasians at the present time lays special stress on the religious nature of Russian culture. The spiritual movement of the Eurasians regards Bolshevism also entirely from a religious point of view as a diabolical manifestation, and wars against rationalism in all its forms with the utmost bitterness. The adherents of the Eurasian group, in their ardent longing for God to rescue Russia from rationalism, have utterly denied not only the culture of the West, but also that of the Slavs, and have thus arrived at a curious state of opposition even

to the Slavophiles of whom they are an offshoot. In their search for a specifically Russian world and culture, they have turned from the treacherous Southern and Western Slavs, with their leanings to the West, and are looking for the source of a spiritual renewal of Russia in the Far East, in Asia, among the Tatars, Sarts, Georgians, Armenians, and Turks. Hence the vacillation between Europe and Asia, from which the name Eurasian is derived.

While Dostoevski had spoken of the West as a " dear beloved graveyard," the Eurasians drive the idea of fighting Western Europe and, in particular, Romano-Germanic culture to extremes, and declare that it is the historical mission of Russia to free the world from the yoke of " Romano-Germanic tyranny."

The Bolshevik Revolution they regard as merely a recapitulation of a spiritual perversion, a consequence of the unnatural evolution of Russia in the direction of Europeanization, which was bound to lead, through atheism, positivism, nihilism, and materialism, to its pitilessly sad and horrible end, communism.

The Bolshevik Revolution signifies to the Eurasians the withdrawal of Russia from present-day European culture; by enormous sacrifices, in the fire of purgatory and the storm of apocalyptic abominations, the consciousness of a new truth must mature in the Russian people.

This birth will consist of the rejection of Western rationalism by the Russian people and their reaffirmation of Orthodoxy. The Eurasians are convinced that an " age of faith " is at hand, which will take the place of the present " age of science." Orthodoxy, the true faith, enlarged and enriched by the cultivation of those Eastern, Asiatic, Eurasian elements which have hitherto been suppressed, to the great loss of humanity, will in the coming time absorb the people and deliver them from Bolshevism. The Eurasians maintain that they are concerned not mainly with a political reaction, but much more with a true re-birth in the loftiest sense of the word, with a return to the mystic springs of the original and unadulterated Russian Orthodoxy.

Chapter XIV

THE *KATORGA*—THEN AND NOW

I

IN the Revolutionary Museum at Moscow there is a room hung with black draperies which contains a collection of documents and relics of the tsarist reign of terror, of terrorism in the prisons of Siberia. Here has been collected and arranged to form a frightful Chamber of Horrors everything calculated to awaken memories of those dark institutions and the perversion of the sense of justice in humanity, and to bring before the eyes of the spectator the tyrannical suppression of all civic liberty and all the cruelties which were characteristic of tsarist Russia. When in this room with its black hangings we look upon the instruments of refined torture which were used not so long ago by Imperial justice, when we hear of this infamous system of political espionage and persecution, and acquire a closer knowledge of the deportations to Siberia, the forced labour in the mines, of everything which the Russian summed up in the term *Katorga*, we dare no longer have any doubt of the innate bestiality of all despotism.

It is very natural that the Revolution, which claims the credit of having freed Russia from the ignominy of tsarist despotism, should have showed great activity and zeal in instituting this museum, which was to be for all time a terrible witness against the old régime, an indictment of tsardom, and at the same time a justification of the Revolution.

It is true that the literary descriptions of Dostoevski and other prisoners had already given us a picture of conditions in Russian prisons and in Siberia; but, during the absolute rule of the tsars it was never possible to reveal the final secrets of these institutions. It was not till after the Revolution that one could form an exact picture of all these terrible things, supported by a melancholy mass of documents, descriptions of eye-witnesses, and *corpora delicti*. This collection in the Revolutionary Museum is unquestionably one of the strongest and most impressive propagandist weapons of Bolshevism, for, in their view, the whole world must be convinced

that a régime which used such implements of punishment was more than ripe for destruction.

In this Chamber of Horrors are arranged in a clear and orderly way the various instruments of punishment and torture, the notorious fetters for ankles and wrists from the tsarist prisons. Here may be seen an implement designed to tear out tufts of the prisoner's hair during his trial, another for tearing apart the nostrils of the delinquent till blood flowed, a pointed instrument used for piercing the eardrums, and an apparatus designed for tearing off the finger and toe nails of refractory prisoners. In addition to whips equipped with screws at the ends, there are leather lassoes with which the adherents of the " Union of the Russian People " loved to fall on their political opponents from ambush.

A special section is devoted to commemorating the Siberian *Katorga*. Here are chains, pictures, and documents showing life in the criminal colonies and in banishment; once again the whole *via dolorosa* of political exile is laid bare to the eyes of the spectator.

The *Katorga* as a penal institution dates from the end of the sixteenth century; the word means approximately penal servitude. Banishment to Siberia was employed as a punishment for ordinary as well as for political offences, and the term of exile was anything from a year and a half to a life sentence. The prisoners were forced to work for the whole period; they were paid, it is true, but the amount was so small that in several years they hardly earned enough to supply them with the barest necessities of life during the first month after their release. Condemned persons had to spend about a third of their term of imprisonment bound hand and foot, the chains not even being removed while they were working. Those sentenced to *Katorga* for life had to bear these fetters for twenty years. The term of penal servitude was served in various penal settlements distributed over the more remote districts of Asiatic Russia; the most melancholy fame of all was enjoyed by the Nerchin Katorga, the penal institution at Irkutsk, and the prison on the Island of Sakhalin. Here the prisoners had to do the most heavy work imaginable; many of them had the truck in which they conveyed the ore welded to the gyves on their wrists. There were several penal settlements of this kind outside Siberia, and prisons everywhere, of which the Schlüsselburg Fortress at Petersburg was one of the most dreaded.

Every novice in the *Katorga* had at the outset to do very heavy work, and was put on lighter jobs only later when he had, by good conduct, proved himself worthy of this favour. When they were sentenced, prisoners lost all civil and human rights, including family rights; the dependents of a man sentenced to the *Katorga* could separate from him, and his wife could obtain a divorce in the Courts.

Sometimes it happened, however, that the family of a condemned person preferred to leave house and home and follow their father to the place of his suffering and privation.

After a prisoner had served his sentence of forced labour, he was by no means finally free: he was then "banished to a settlement." He was handed over to the police, who conveyed him to a remote place in Siberia and domiciled him there. The freedom of movement of these settlers was restricted: to begin with they were allowed to move only within the limits of a small political district; this was gradually extended, but they did not attain complete freedom till the end of ten years.

According to statutory regulation, this banishment had to be endured by every *Katorga* prisoner; if, during this period, he went near any place prohibited to him, he had to undergo another four years of *Katorga*.

2

The Revolution considered it to be one of its first duties to put an end to these barbarous conditions: in March 1917 the Kerenski Provisional Government issued a general amnesty, restoring all political offenders to full civil rights. The Bolshevik régime went farther, and tried as far as they could to give these martyrs of the Revolution moral and material compensation for the injuries they had suffered in Siberia. The former *Katorga* prisoners were honoured in every possible way by the authorities: they were treated as a kind of revolutionary nobility and received many extensive privileges. In the course of time, these prisoners in many respects actually attained an aristocratic position; their club, the Katorga Club, is one of the most exclusive and distinguished associations in Soviet Russia, admission to which is conditional on proof of a minimum period of ten years' political *Katorga* sentence.

Both to the Katorga Club and to its individual members the State has granted benefits greater than those enjoyed even by the highest Government officials. A special fund relieves them of all material cares; sanatoria and convalescent homes are at their disposal in all the chief health resorts, and they have one of the finest palaces as their headquarters.

The former *Katorga* prisoners have founded a number of undertakings, including a publishing business and a bookseller's shop in the centre of Moscow, which publishes mainly works on the history of the Revolution and interesting memoirs of individual prisoners; the Government has released these undertakings from all obligation to pay taxes and other dues. The company has set up a special

employment exchange for the benefit of its members, which has been granted special privileges by the Central Employment Exchange Office. Elderly revolutionaries and those unable to work enjoy Government pensions and have had whole palaces assigned to them by the authorities as dwellings.

One of the most distinguished members of this new nobility is the octogenarian revolutionary, Aschenbrenner, who passed a whole generation in the *Katorga*. He, despite his position as Chief of the General Staff, joined the revolutionaries, and not only co-operated in anti-Imperial propaganda, but took an active part in the attempt on the life of Alexander the Second. Associated in this attempt was also another octogenarian, a woman named Vera Figner. She spent many decades in the *Katorga*, and she is also now a distinguished member of the Katorga Club. Another outstanding figure is the well-known Professor Morozov, a scientist of world repute, who spent a great part of his life as a prisoner in the Schlüsselburg Fortress; the Soviet Government presented him with the usufruct of a nationalized estate as a mark of their appreciation. Finally, several members of the Revolutionary Government belong to the Katorga Club, among them the ex-Minister of Finance, Tseretelli.

A recommendation from the president of the Katorga Club is of more value in Soviet Russia even than that of the People's Commissars: it opens all doors and gives the possessor the entry everywhere, even to the highest Government offices.

The existence of such a society, and its privileged position in the midst of the efforts after equality characterizing the Bolshevik régime, is unquestionably a most peculiar phenomenon. A new nobility has been created, though its term is limited, since, in course of time, these ex-prisoners, who are mostly already advanced in years, will sooner or later die out.

3

Should the future, however, bring another change of rule, then perhaps the Katorga Club will revive and gain a number of quite different members. For, however paradoxical it may sound, the Soviet Government, which owes its existence not least to the protest against tsarist terrorism and is always drawing attention to this with the greatest assurance, has itself maintained to the fullest extent the old approved violent measures of the earlier régime, and is now applying them to establish the kingdom of the redeemed. The change is merely in the direction of the tyranny; the means of oppression are exactly the same. As before, every person who does

not submit to the commands of the authorities, who comes forward as a political opponent of the ruling class, is humiliated, degraded, tortured, and banished to Siberia.

The Bolshevik régime is also providing a supply of political martyrs, from which one day perhaps a new Katorga Club will be formed, if a new upheaval once again "redeems" Russia. Then there will be a new Chamber of Horrors to house the instruments of torture, the chains and shackles of the present-day Secret Police, pictures of the *Katorga* of to-day and documents relating to the equally cruel ill-treatment which is going on to-day and will continue to go on under Bolshevik rule.

Russian history seems to develop in accordance with a terrible law of "eternal return." The Russian people are always being freed afresh and immediately re-establishing their prisons, instruments of torture, and their own particular Siberia, in order to provide a Katorga company for the coming age. In obedience to a logical law, liberation and oppression in Russia are inextricably bound up with each other, even identical with each other. Thus it happens that Siberia, even under the rule of the Soviets, again serves its old melancholy purpose; it is as before with its characteristic towns, its endless steppes, and its mines, the land of exile and forced labour. The preservation of this old tradition is one of the few conservative features in Soviet rule; the new authorities, who otherwise show so little reverence, are full of respect for this system, and have not dared to interfere with the traditional destiny of Siberia.

As in the old days, great crowds of people stream steadily to this distant land of exile, those who are for some reason or other suspect to the "collective man," against whom it has been impossible to prove any real charge, but who for some reason are displeasing to the Cheka. Just as, under the rule of the tsars, political espionage on subjects was developed into a reliably functioning system by means of the Okhrana, so the Bolshevik Cheka tried in every way to come up to its standards. In one point the Cheka was even superior to its predecessor: it was completely independent of the courts and could decide the fate of any citizen at its own discretion. The Cheka employed an enormous staff of spies in all social circles, and an army of examining magistrates, whose sentences were most summary, and who disliked being bothered with lengthy enquiries, and so acquitted, or, more frequently, condemned, offenders at random. No legal procedure of the usual kind existed: either you believed or did not believe the report of a spy, and gave judgment accordingly; the sentence might be a shorter or longer term of imprisonment, exile, or death. There was no legal remedy whatever, and thus many people, who had somehow got in the way of an informer, were sacrificed to a regrettable "misunderstanding,"

or, as it was usually expressed, in commercial language, " entered to the expenses account."

Death sentences were carried out by a revolver shot in the back of the head, generally at night, an arrangement which was considered remarkably humane. The bodies of the victims were not handed over to their families but buried secretly.

> " Little apple, little apple, where are you rolling to?
> Are you rolling to the Cheka?
> Then you will never come back again."

This popular song, which calls round human heads " little apples," admirably hits off the summary procedure of the Cheka. An army of adventurers and informers took care that the " little apples " never came back, for the spy received a bonus for each victim.

The business of the Bolshevik secret police flourished particularly in the period of militant communism, when every kind of trading was strictly prohibited. Later, when the Nep system was introduced, it seemed advisable to limit the powers of the Cheka. They were deprived of their judicial authority, and their function was reduced to political espionage and informing the authorities of ostensible or real counter-revolutionary schemes. The Cheka was placed under the control of the People's Commissariat for the Interior, and thereby lost a large part of its previous unlimited authority; it changed its name too at this time, and became the G.P.U. or Political Central Authority.

The G.P.U. works on " more refined and elegant lines ": its officials are extremely polite, amiable, and obliging, and do all they can to obliterate the dark memories left by the Cheka. But there is no great difference essentially between the two institutions. True, the G.P.U. has no sovereign judicial authority; but it can keep suspected persons under arrest for three months without any legal proceedings, and it is only on the expiry of this period that it is obliged to hand them over to the regular authorities. The " G.P.U." devote special attention to the revival of trading, for freedom of trade and capitalistic economic activity are only intended to last for a short time. Since the new economic policy resulted in a rapid revival of commercial life, the Bolsheviks began to be uneasy, and again took to penalizing activities which they had permitted a little time before. Immediately a vexatious system of provocation was evolved: the Government permitted the opening of all kinds of shops; it itself unscrupulously carried on gambling dens of all kinds, and introduced a large measure of commercial freedom, only to turn and prosecute, imprison, and punish all the people who had taken their promises at face value. In order to preserve appearances, it

was declared that these were cases of unlawful excesses, sordid speculation, and transgressions of the legal limit, but in the present defective procedure of the Bolshevik courts, it is extremely difficult to investigate these assertions.

Thus a great part of the Siberian prisoners in Russia to-day consists of those " Nep people " who were supported by the Government as long as it needed them for the reorganization of their ruined industry and trade, but were banished to Siberia as soon as their services could be dispensed with. The authorities contrived to combine business with pleasure, by deporting to Siberia not only the " guilty Nep man," who had " speculated professionally " or " lived on games of chance," but also their whole families, in this way setting free many houses in Moscow. The shortage of houses in Moscow is very great, and the official departments eagerly welcomed this power, which put them in possession of many, mostly well appointed, dwellings.

Thus, the introduction of the Nep system proved only a brief respite in the practice of banishing people to Siberia. The Bolshevik courts at present impose sentences of deportation for periods of from three to four years; the condemned prisoners lead a desolate and hopelessly gloomy existence, cut off from all contact with the civilized world in the most remote districts of Siberia and North Russia. The Siberian exiles include not only merchants, but also numerous politicians, especially socialists, scholars, clergy, journalists, and representatives of other professions, for the Bolsheviks only occasionally suffer political activity in a sense not agreeable to them. If trusting people are led by their belief in the apparent tolerance of the Government to put forward their views, then all at once the liberal decrees are repealed, and political opponents thus enticed out of their obscurity are arrested and deported. The very peculiar nature of the crimes which the Bolshevik " saviours of mankind " punish by exile may be seen in its most gross form from the report which fifty-eight German workers of communist views made on their visit to Soviet Russia. The delegation visited the prison at Sverdlovsk, an intermediate station for deported persons, and talked with various prisoners.

" The number of prisoners," says this publication, " was 781, 75 per cent. of whom had been sentenced for offences against property and 25 per cent. for other criminal actions, chiefly the manufacture of vodka. Among the prisoners were over 100 women. In addition, the prison contained 22 political prisoners, interned there temporarily on their way to their place of exile. Among them were 15 lads of the Jewish faith. They gave as the reason for their arrest that they were members of a Zionist club. In this club, they used to agitate for the founding of a Zionist paper, and tried to find

supporters for their ideas by circulating pamphlets. They also supported the founding of a Jewish kingdom in Palestine. According to their own account, permission to travel to Palestine was refused. They had been detained for nine months, and then banished to Siberia for three years." Membership of a Zionist club in Russia is thus a crime, which is punished by detention for nine months and three years' exile in Siberia.

So the *Katorga* still exists, though in a different form. Bolshevik justice far exceeds tsarist justice in its methods and principles. However inadequate judicial proceedings may have been under the old régime, still trials did take place, with the taking of evidence, bill of indictment, hearing of witnesses, and speeches for the defence. But the Bolshevik authorities have dispensed with all these formalities, and have established an arbitrary rule unknown in the rest of the world for centuries.

4

For the new ruler of Russia, the mass man, who came to bring freedom to the earth, in a very short time learned how to use the resources and tricks of tyranny better than the cruellest tsars. The mass man soon came to assume all the fitting attributes and expedients of despotism: he captured the Kremlin, equipped a mighty army, and spread over the realm a network of secret police, spies, and executioners, much more compact and reliable than the earlier old-fashioned institutions for the same purpose, in order to suppress all free speech between Moscow and Vladivostok. Like all great despots, the mass man had his court poets to sing his praises as well as a host of flatterers and courtiers, whose loyalty was rewarded with high posts, orders, and decorations.

Of course, in conformity with changed circumstances, all these tried old institutions appeared in new garb. The court poets were now called " people's poets," the tyrants' favourites were decorated with the Order of the Red Flag, and troublesome subjects were handed over to the G.P.U. instead of to the Okhrana. But the external effect was the same under Bolshevism as under the dominion of the tsars. No one ventured on any protest, any resistance, however slight; there was not a single open word of censure; tyranny seemed more complete than ever.

But all at once it became evident that the subtly constricted apparatus of " mechanized obedience " was not entirely reliable. Of course, no one dared to resist the new Government, although all the attempts to make the community happy, in whose name the despotism was justified, failed miserably and nothing but terrorism remained. Nevertheless, something disconcerting happened, due to

natural forces without any intervention on the part of the subjects: that unpleasant thing the " soul," which, in spite of all mechanization, had never been completely eradicated, and was sleeping a sleep that looked like death, suddenly woke up in a smile that lurked on the lips of someone somewhere. With this first smile at the failure of the loudly trumpeted experiments of Bolshevism began the real, the dangerous counter-revolution, for it worked in secret and gradually attained a sinister power. At first one person smiled, then others in increasing numbers. Soon the smilers united in a mystical organization and then mirth at last expanded into uncontrollable elemental laughter. This first revolt against Bolshevik oppression was the rebellion of the despairing; ever more frequently the hidden wrath became irony, ever louder swelled an uncanny mirth, which threatened to shake the very foundations of the whole structure of State authority.

In Moscow and Petersburg the rulers were able to check the " epidemic of irony " midway in its course, for here the feelings of the subjects were under the strictest police supervision; in the provinces, however, among the peasants, laughter went in a triumphal march through the village streets, captured the market-places, and began to press steadily forward towards the official headquarters.

The Soviets rightly made light of all other forms of counter-revolution, for they could rely on the mighty machine of the Red Army and the secret police; but the dreaded masters of the Red Kremlin themselves trembled at this rising of laughers and jokers. In order to prevent an elemental outburst of all-dissolving universal mirth and to deprive this grave danger of all significance, the authorities hit on the clever idea of having recourse to an old institution, which has always been inseparably bound up with despotism, the office of the court fool. By this means the powers effectively took the initiative in this mockery of unpopular institutions and guided it into the right path.

At a time when the last of these court fools had died out in Western Europe, Peter the Great chose his " merry councillors " from the highest circles of the aristocracy, from princes of the oldest blood. To them alone he granted the right to speak the truth and to give utterance to all that his other subjects would hardly have dared to think. For centuries the court fool, therefore, was the sole expression of the will of the people, the gay adversary of dark tyranny.

It is unquestionably a proof of the cleverness of the new rulers that they, like their predecessors, recognized in time the necessity of the jester, and tried to turn aside the general secret discontent by the reintroduction of merry councillors of this kind. Hence the solemn resurrection of the court fool, who alone was permitted

to tell the truth to his masters in the midst of a crowd of trembling flatterers. He, too, had a different name and ostensibly discharged quite a different function: the old court fool was transformed into a circus clown and from the ring amused the people with his malicious jokes.

"Bim" and "Bom" were the names of the two "merry councillors" of the new tsar, the mass man; they alone among the hundred millions of Russians were granted the right to express their opinions freely; they might mock, criticize, and deride the rulers at a time when the most rigorous persecution and terrorism prevailed throughout the whole country. Bim and Bom had received a special permit from the Soviets to express openly everything which was current among the people in a secret and threatening way, and thus to provide an outlet for latent rancour. Every evening, the thousand-headed mass man, fawned upon by the whole court, sat in the circus and listened eagerly to the slanderous speeches of the two clowns Bim and Bom. In the midst of grotesque acrobatics and buffooneries, amid jokes and play, these two were allowed to utter bitter truths to which otherwise the ear of the ruler was angrily shut.

The circus in which Bim and Bom performed was crowded night after night to the farthest limits: people came from far and wide to hear Bim and Bom, who soon became star clowns. Their jokes were the daily talk of Moscow. One person told them to another, until finally the whole town knew the latest insults which these two fools had permitted themselves to make.

In the dark period of militant communism, people were particularly under the spell of the two clowns; at that time, the loose jokes to which Bim and Bom treated them with untiring energy were the one respite from the continuous pressure of force and tyranny, the only possibility of hearing open criticism and mockery of the ruler, the mass man. People abandoned themselves voluptuously to these precious moments of intellectual freedom.

In spite of their impudent criticisms, Bim and Bom were nevertheless one of the chief supports of the Bolshevik régime: the universal discontent would have burst all bounds if it had not been dissolved in harmless mirth by the two clowns. But, however biting might be the satire of Bim and Bom, the Government could rely on their never overstepping the limits of the permissible, for Bim and Bom were completely trustworthy members of the Communist Party, and at the bottom of their hearts loyal servants of their masters. They understood how to draw the fangs of the seemingly most malicious jest before they let it loose in the ring. Their attacks were never directed against the whole, but only against details, and thus they contrived to divert attention from essentials.

Besides, every one of their jokes contained a hidden warning to the laughter lovers: "Take care: Look out, we know you! We are aware of what you are thinking and feeling!"

In this way the Bolsheviks were able to overcome a great danger, and with the help of their court fools gradually to make even wit serve their ends. But the subjects proved superior in astuteness and cunning: with quick perception, they soon saw through the designs of the tyrant and contrived to frustrate them. They purposely ignored the undertone of warning in the jokes of the clowns, abandoned themselves to the pleasure of spreading the sayings of Bim and Bom all over the place, repeated them a hundred times, and thus had no need to be afraid; they could always appeal to the authorship of the two officially patented jesters. Soon they became bolder, and in repeating these jokes added a malicious point or two of their own, for which of course responsibility was heaped on the shoulders of Bim and Bom. It was not long before hundreds of malicious quips were current, which were merely in name the products of the court fools, and were really conceived in the rebellious brain of the subjects. Anyone who wished to air a dangerous *mot* now prefaced it with "Have you heard what Bim said yesterday?" and with this introduction anyone could with impunity give vent to the boldest contempt for the Soviets.

Very soon the malicious witticisms on the new ruler assumed threatening proportions; protected by the immunity enjoyed by the sayings of Bim and Bom, everybody indulged in satires that were entirely their own. If the clever tyrants thought with the help of their court fools to capture and subdue wit itself, the subjects once again proved much more cunning and provided themselves with a private joke, by ascribing their own malicious sayings to Bim and Bom. When the Soviets tried to discover the real origin of satire of this kind, one person had heard the anecdote from another and so on *ad infinitum*, but always linked up with some legendary utterance of Bim and Bom.

To cover their tracks completely with the authorities and avoid prosecution, the subjects as time went on hit on the idea of coupling sharp censure with every insult to the Soviets. Then one day somebody thought of adding, after some rancorous witticism ostensibly originating with the clowns, the words: "Bim and Bom have been arrested and actually put to death for this bold utterance." This addendum of pious reverence for the law soon became very popular and was reduced to a formula; thereafter, all anecdotes about the two clowns were followed by the words: "They have been arrested and put to death for this—yes, really, put to death!"

In a short time the two real clowns, Bim and Bom, who performed every night in a circus with the sanction of the Government,

were lost sight of behind two mythical figures: the people had turned them into legendary heroes, who had dared to oppose the rulers freely and bravely and had paid for it with their lives. Soon nobody bothered about the real clowns who appeared daily in the circus; they were entirely forgotten. The universal interest and sympathy of the people were now felt for the imaginary figures of Bim and Bom, who, created by the resistance of an oppressed people, had bravely represented the cause of the dispossessed and sacrificed their lives for them.

Every day the worthy martyrs rise again from the dead and appear in the ring of the imagination, to express straight out to the ruling mass man the true thoughts of the real people; over and over again legend consigns them to prison and condemns them to death, and still with untiring loyalty they rise again to fulfill their lofty mission of mockery. The legendary figures of Bim and Bom, as created by the popular imagination to free it from the lowest slavery, have become more powerful than the Soviet rulers themselves; they mock at the Cheka and the prisons, for they are no longer creatures of flesh and blood, but formed from the immortal stuff of legend.

Chapter XV

THE ETHICS OF BOLSHEVISM

I

THE *Katorga* of yesterday was followed by the *Katorga* of to-day, for the liberation of the oppressed and disinherited called for fresh oppression and further disinheriting; force, prisons, and gallows, espionage, secret police, and all kinds of material and spiritual terrorism were to usher in the kingdom of "freedom for all."

Even in the history of other nations, revolutions have led to brutal measures of violence; but what formerly seemed gross contradiction and was regarded as a denial and betrayal of the very idea of freedom, was in Russia consciously and deliberately stamped as a new truth, a fundamental discovery. The new truth is this: humanity can be made happy only by compulsion and liberated only by oppression and terrorism. Previously, states, classes, or groups who had recourse to crude violence in carrying out their aims had to tremble before the moral judgment of mankind, and to feel ashamed of the necessity of maintaining their rule by a lie; they tried either to disavow or to excuse the brutality of their actions. But the Bolsheviks quite openly professed a creed of terrorism and made it the starting point of their doctrine of salvation and of their ethics.

A new age once again attacked the historic task of bringing the earthly paradise to mankind; for the sake of this end all the ideals previously formed by the human soul, in its striving for infinities, had to be thrust aside; the practical reason, now recognized as the only reliable standard, alone was to decide what was useful for its true happiness and what could smooth the way for this. According to this much extolled "practical reason," of which the Bolsheviks claim to be the sole discoverer, the happiness of mankind cannot be attained by striving for moral freedom, but solely by a compulsorily introduced improvement in the material conditions of life. The world cannot be happy unless it is deprived of its freedom, which is nothing but a torment and a burden to it, and unless men are by force maintained in a condition of earthly bliss thought out by the authorities in accordance with reason. Freedom is incompatible

with the true happiness of the masses. Therefore, freedom of conscience for the individual, the choice between good and evil, is harmful and even dangerous for the salvation of the world; the only way to happiness ultimately lies in absolute obedience.

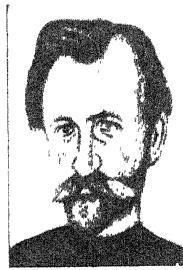
"Freedom is a bourgeois prejudice." These words of Lenin express in the crudest form the idea that humanity can participate in earthly happiness only through a dictatorship, aided by a reliable army and a horde of spies, prison warders, and torturers.

It was only by the proclamation of this new "morality," in which everything that had previously been regarded as crime and ignominy was exalted as the "only valid truth," that the great revolution of Bolshevism was really accomplished. It is here that the deep meaning of this monstrous revolution may be most clearly recognized: it is the complete reinterpretation of truth. With the axiom: "Freedom is a bourgeois prejudice," and the dogma: "Only by dictatorship can humanity be brought to happiness," a revolution took place which for ever divided the world of yesterday from the world of to-morrow.

What was previously sense was now nonsense; the ideal of moral and civic freedom previously held to be the supreme truth, dwindled into a lie; dictatorship, hitherto regarded as repulsive, now became a moral necessity. The distinction between good and evil must in future be made not by feeling, but by the understanding; henceforward, everything practical was good, and everything unpractical bad. The moral judgment of human fate and human action thus lost its absolute character, and morality became a "dialectically" relative value, whose principles were determined entirely by the class interests of the moment. Since Bolshevism was fighting for the rise of the working class, all the needs of this class were inevitably regarded as moral necessities; the extermination of the bourgeoisie was declared to be justified, while at the same time any injury, however slight, done to a worker must be prosecuted as a serious crime.

"We repudiate," said Lenin in a speech to young people, "all morality which proceeds from supernatural ideas or ideas which are outside class conceptions. In our opinion morality is entirely subordinate to the interests of the class war; everything is moral which is necessary for the annihilation of the old exploiting social order and for the uniting of the proletariat. Our morality thus consists solely in close discipline and in conscious war against the exploiters. We do not believe in eternal principles of morality, and we will expose this deception. Communist morality is identical with the fight for the strengthening of the dictatorship of the proletariat."

E. Preobrashenski, a pupil and follower of Lenin, in one of his



PREOBRASHENSKI

The founder of
"Bolshevik Ethics"

DZERSHINKI

Chief of the G.P.U. (the
former "Cheka")

ZINOV'EV

The Apostle of
"Leninism"

DEM'IAN BEDNII

The bard of "Songs of
Hate," officially approved
by the Soviet Government

MIKHAIL POKROVSKI

The historian of Bolshevism

books, has brought together all the important " moral and class norms " of Bolshevism; it is characteristic that this work is dedicated to M. Dzerzhinski, the chief of the Cheka. This dedication, however, becomes immediately understandable when you read in Preobrashenski that morality, " translated from the misty language of morals into the language of ordinary life," is identical with what is advantageous, useful, expedient for a definite group of men. Everything, on the other hand, is immoral which seems harmful and inexpedient to this group. There has never been a system of morality whose claims were not founded on the needs of certain social classes. What is necessary for a given society, class, or group is always regarded by them as moral, and everything which is not useful as immoral, the harm or usefulness being regarded as direct or indirect, as immediate or as applying at some future date. The valuation and treatment of morality in this way is, according to Preobrashenski, the only correct interpretation of ethics, which is nothing but a weapon in the class war.

If ethics has been at all times the mere product of economic interests, the man of the present day must not dare to make any change in its historic rôle; what was valid in the past is even more completely justified to-day; therefore, the ethics of the present is nothing but a collection of all that is useful to the proletariat. Preobrashenski tries to prove by the example of the attitude of workers and factory owners towards strike-breakers that the same situation can lead to a completely different valuation among people whose interests are different: the striking workers regard the strike-breakers as traitors and consider it their duty to prevent them from working, by persuasion or force, while the factory owner regards this attempt of the strikers as an infringement of the ethical claim to personal freedom.

" From this, we perceive that damage to material interests seems an offence against human morality or is consciously represented as such. Hence, we see that certain groups or classes contrived, by an unconscious process, even in earlier days, to adapt their moral convictions to their own class interest. For them everything is moral which is compatible with their class interests and which increases their chances of victory in the class war."

But the morality of the workers also changes in accordance with the militant interests of the moment. Preobrashenski shows how the strike, which was useful and, therefore, moral under capitalistic dominion, has become injurious and, therefore, immoral in the communist state.

Once the Bolsheviks had come to regard the functional connec-

tion between the class interest of the moment and morality as a proved truth, they consciously and openly professed their conviction that there is no such thing as absolute morality, and that the immediate practical value of individual actions for the proletariat must be held to be the only moral and ethical standard. The logical consequence of this is that no means, neither crime nor lying nor deceit, could in itself be reprehensible if it could be used for a useful purpose: "Whereas in a society in which there are no classes, lying is a disadvantage in itself, because it compels the members of the society to use their energy in discovering the truth, the case is quite different in a society based on class. In the struggle of an exploited class against their enemies, lying and deceit are often very important weapons; all the subterranean work of revolutionary organizations actually depends on over-reaching the power of the State. The workers' State, surrounded as it is on all sides by hostile capitalist countries, finds lying very necessary and useful in its foreign policy. Therefore, the attitude of the working class and the Communist Party to the open recognition of the right to lie is quite different from that of the Western European Socialists, those God-fearing *petits bourgeois*, who are systematically deceived and treated as fools by the representatives of capital.

"But the lie becomes a most harmful habit in social life if it is not necessary in the interest of the class war, because it disintegrates the working class itself. In so far as the future is to belong solely to a social order in which there are no classes, it belongs of course also to truth; the lie, on the other hand, is a consequence of the oppression of one man by another, the result of the class and group war. It cannot disappear until the division of society into classes has ceased."

2

Involuntarily, the mind leaps to a comparison between the Bolshevik interpretation of ethics and morality and the spiritual tendencies of Jesuitism, which have hitherto always been taboo in Europe to all free-thinking men. Dostoevski, that great seer, in his "Legend of the Grand Inquisitor," which now seems prophetic, intuitively grasped and developed the identity between the peculiar variety of socialism long cherished in Russia and the ideas of the Jesuits. Dostoevski found the same spirit in this Socialism and in Jesuitism; the "Grand Inquisitor" is the spokesman of both philosophies. Berdiaev has shown in an excellent analysis of "Dostoevski's *Weltanschauung*," that this writer found in the nihilistic and terroristic socialism of his time an idea which was identical

with that at the root of the Catholic Inquisition. He regarded the communist state established by force as nothing but the logical consequence and ultimate emanation of mediaeval Catholicism; both show the same negation of intellectual freedom, the same intolerance, and the same tendency to make humanity happy by force and against its will.

In the "Legend of the Grand Inquisitor" Dostoevski, in Berdiaev's view, had socialism rather than Catholicism in mind: "The rule of the papist theocracy with its dangerous errors belongs wholly to the past. The coming kingdom of the Grand Inquisitor is allied not so much with Catholicism as with atheistic and materialistic socialism."

Both Russian socialism, with its nihilistic tendencies, and Jesuitism shared the view that man is unable to bear the burden of free will. The Grand Inquisitor and Russian socialism both reproach Christ because, in giving man the gift of freedom of conscience, He laid on him a burden beyond his strength; freedom and happiness are incompatible for humanity. "We will convince them," says the Grand Inquisitor, "that they can only be free if they resign their freedom.... I tell thee that man has no greater care and anxiety than to find someone to whom he can hand over this gift of freedom with which he was cursed at birth."

The notebooks found among Dostoevski's papers after his death confirm in every respect the view that the novelist saw a spiritual identity between Jesuitism and the Russian socialism of the time, the archetype of the Bolshevism of to-day. In both schools he saw the same "Spirit of liberation by despotism, and of making mankind happy by force."

It is, in fact, astounding how many of the principles of morality, as laid down by Bolshevism, are contained in the Jesuit doctrines. "To whom the end is permitted," states the *Arbor scientiae* of Jac. Ilsung, belonging to the year 1693, "to him is also permitted the means, which by its natural character leads to that end."

"To whom the end is permitted," says the Jesuit Hermann Busembaum (1653), "to him is the means also permitted." "In all cases," writes the Jesuit Etienne Bauny (1653), "man may be ill disposed to his neighbour without sin, if he is moved thereto entirely for a good end."

The practical consequences of this dogma of the justification of the means by the end is the same with the Jesuits as with the Bolsheviks; for example, in a pamphlet by Car. Ant. Casnedi of the year 1711, we read that God forbids theft only "if it is recognized as evil and not when it is recognized as good." Johannes de Dicastillo, in his work *De justitia et jure*, published in 1641, draws the final conclusions of this doctrine by declaring that, in his judgment,

' if a father is injurious to the State and the common weal, and there is no other way of averting this evil, he would permit the son to slay his outlawed father."

The denial of freedom of conscience is also entirely Jesuitical; for Jesuitism worked out a doctrine of " probabilism," according to which a man may peacefully follow the view of a recognized authority without any regard to his own moral judgment. " I say," writes Georgius of Rhodes in 1671, " that the probability of a view is satisfied, if it is supported by noted and pious teachers, especially one of the newer ones." The Jesuit Amadius Guimenius goes farther with his sentence: " Even if a view is false, a man may follow it in practice with a good conscience, relying on the prestige of the teacher." There are also many other passages among the writings of the Jesuits supporting the view that a lie is permissible under certain conditions as a means to a higher end.

The agreement between the morality of the Bolsheviks and that of the Jesuits is also very clearly shown by the fact that the forerunners of the Bolsheviks in Russia were not really a product of Marxism so much as of the confused nihilistic ideas of Bakunin, Nechaev, and others. They, however, repeatedly and quite openly avowed their leanings to Jesuitism. Bakunin, in particular, the real father of Bolshevism, the spiritual pioneer of this Jesuitical socialism, declared: " Poison, the dagger, the rope, and other murderous tools," may, under certain conditions, " be justified by revolutionary thought."

A " Catechism," ascribed to Bakunin's pupil Nechaev, which in all probability originated with Bakunin himself, contains everything to be found later in Lenin and Preobrashenski's new morality based on the class interests of the moment. The revolutionary, states this Catechism, must be a blind tool of the leader, give up all his personal interests and feelings and break all family ties; hate itself must be subordinate to the views and orders of the leader. " The member of the Federation may and must use all means necessary: he may lie if his lie would increase revolutionary energy."

Here the parallel with the famous sentence from the rules of the Jesuit Order is quite clear and unmistakable; it is stated in the *Summarium Constitutionum* of Ignatius Loyola that every Jesuit must obey his superior, and be guided and led by him, " as if he were a corpse or a staff in the hand of an old man to serve him who holds it wherever and however it seems good to him."

Bakunin sometimes made an open confession of Jesuitism, though he rejected the doctrine at the end of his life. " The individual revolutionary," he once declared, " must completely renounce his own will "; and in so saying he quite consciously made use of the watchword of the Jesuit Order.

3

Bolshevism, therefore, is the result of the transference of Jesuit maxims to revolutionary tactics; its spirit is the same as that of the *ecclesia militans* of Ignatius Loyola. In both we find the principle that the end justifies the means; with the Jesuits the existence and prosperity of the Order and of the Church, with the Bolsheviks, the Soviet régime and the dictatorship of the proletariat is the end to be attained by all means. Both institutions are characterized by an extremely reactionary attitude from a cultural and political standpoint, the suppression of all opposing opinion; it is quite startling to find how closely here the " revolutionary sentiments " of the Soviet authorities are allied with the reactionary tendencies of the Jesuits.

But while the undoubted great success of the Jesuits was mainly due to a traditional, firmly welded hierarchy and the famous " corpse obedience " of their members to those set in spiritual authority over them, the Bolsheviks could not attain the high intellectual quality which has always been present in the Jesuit exercise of power. For, whereas in the Society of Jesus the decision on what was to be regarded as expedient in various cases has always been in the hands of the oldest and most experienced members, who have attained to wisdom by long and self-sacrificing service, with the Bolsheviks the judgment of each individual case all too frequently depends on the discretion of quite young, immature, ignorant, and subordinate village pashas, who are but seldom able to grasp the true interests of the community.

The spiritual refinement of the methods of force gradually evolved by Jesuitism is at present entirely absent from Bolshevism, to which still cling many remnants of the primitive and barbarous terrorism which Dostoevski attributed to his revolutionaries in *The Possessed*. If we are really to call Bolshevism a branch of Jesuitism, we should have to style it perhaps a " barbarous Jesuitism."

It is only by the discovery of this very close kinship between the Soviets and the Society of Jesus, between the apparently " scientific " materialism and the hierarchical system of Loyola, that the true nature of Bolshevism can be completely understood. Man, therefore, if he is to be happy in the Bolshevik sense, must obey not the inner truth of conscience, but the commands of a number of authorities who claim to be able, as being cleverer, to weigh soberly what is best and most useful for the community. In this substitution of the results of coolly calculated deliberation on the part of the authorities for the individual conscience, the inmost meaning of Bolshevik rationalism is unmasked, and found to be nothing but the debasing

of infinite truth to a flat system of the most commonplace authoritarian utilitarianism. The spirit disguised in the depersonalization of man, in the mechanization of all forms of existence, in the eradication of the soul, in the fight against idealism, all the thousand masks of a new culture, a new style, a new art, and music, is openly displayed in Bolshevik morality, naked and unashamed, arrogant and contemptuous, as a brutal despotism. "Freedom is a bourgeois prejudice," shout the Bolsheviks in the full triumphant consciousness of their victory to the groaning, oppressed nation; "human happiness can only be attained by lack of freedom, by slavish obedience."

Once we have thus grasped the true nature of Bolshevism, it is plain that it is not the expropriation of private property, land, and the means of production, not the radical economic, political, and financial measures of the Bolsheviks that are bound to affect and interest Europeans most profoundly. For the boldest interference in the private economic and political affairs of the Russian subject may be merely an internal question of Russian political leadership. What concerns the whole civilized world in the highest degree is this "barbarous jesuitry," which claims to be a doctrine of salvation for the whole of humanity, while in reality it is threatening its very foundations.

Bolshevism aims at more than the confiscation of private property: it is trying to confiscate human dignity in order ultimately to turn all free reasonable beings into a horde of will-less slaves. What a boundless disdain for man is implied in this belief that universal oppression is the only way of salvation! It is the same language with which Dostoevski's nihilistic Socialist, Shigalëv, in the novel, *The Possessed*, and later, in a more spiritualized form, the Jesuit "Grand Inquisitor" in the *Brothers Karamazov*, championed the making the world happy by organized tyranny.

EPILOGUE

EPILOGUE

DOSTOEVSKI'S VISION OF BOLSHEVISM

> ". . . This eminent novelist was a psychologist of convulsions, a painter of catastrophes. He could not imagine our nature as tranquil, well shaped, and ordered once and for all. Dostoevski's eyes, peering into the mist, follow with tension the fateful imperfection, the unrest of the revolting mind. For this reason, he was one of the enthusiastic prophets of the present bloody time. To-day we read the *Possessed*, which has become reality, living it and suffering with it; we create the novel afresh in union with the author. We see a dream realized and we marvel at the visionary clairvoyance of this dreamer who cast the spell of Revolution on Russia. . . ." (Extract from the Bolshevik critic, N. Eichenwald, written for the centenary of the birth of Dostoevski.)
>
> ". . . Russia goes forward on her thorny but glorious way, and behind her stand her great prophets who bless her on her path. Among them the most enthralling and splendid of all, rises the figure of Fedor Dostoevski." (Lunacharski on Dostoevski.)

Extract from Dostoevski's novel, *The Possessed*

Shigalëv is developing his programme for the society of the future in a secret meeting of the conspirators:

" Since it is absolutely necessary to fix the social order of the future now, at this very moment, since we are at last preparing to act, to avoid future uncertainty, I put forward my own system for a new world order. . . . I must first point out that my system is not yet completed, not yet entirely worked out. For I have got entangled in my own arguments: my final conclusion is diametrically opposed to my original idea. Although I started from the notion of unrestricted freedom, I arrived in the end at absolute despotism. I may add, however, that there can be no possible solution but mine. . . ."

Another member of the secret conclave carries Shigalëv's idea further:

" Mr. Shigalëv has devoted himself too conscientiously to his task, and is also much too modest. I know his book. In it he

proposes to divide mankind into two unequal parts. Only the smaller part, about a tenth of the whole, will enjoy personal freedom and unrestricted power over the other nine-tenths. These nine-tenths must entirely renounce all personality and become, so to speak, a herd, in order, through absolute obedience, by a series of regenerations, to regain their original innocence, almost like the old Garden of Eden, although, as may be remarked in passing, they will have to work. The measures proposed by the author for depriving nine-tenths of humanity of their personal will and for turning them into a herd by means of a new education during whole generations, are uncommonly remarkable, and are in addition based on the facts of nature and are highly logical. . . ."

Peter Verkhovenski to Stavrogin on Shigalëv's ideas:

" One thing in his book is good, the idea of espionage. In his idea, every member of the society spies on the others, and is bound to inform against them when necessary. All are slaves and equal in their slavery. . . . First of all, the level of education, science, and innate natural talent falls. A high intellectual level is possible only to superior talents; but we have no need of superior talents. Superior talents have always seized power for themselves and led to despotism. Men of talent cannot help becoming despots, they have always done more harm than good; therefore they are driven out or put to death. . . . Slaves must be equal: without despotism there has never yet been freedom or equality; but in the herd all must be equal, that's Shigalëvism! Does that seem extraordinary to you? I am for Shigalëvism. . . . Listen, Stavrogin, to level mountains is a fine idea, not a ridiculous one. Education is not necessary and we have enough science. Even without science, we have material enough to last for a thousand years, but first we must enforce obedience. The thirst for education is an aristocratic impulse; with family and love, you have at once the desire for property. We will destroy this desire; we will spread drunkenness, slander, espionage; we'll spread incredible demoralization: we'll murder every genius in infancy. Everything will be reduced to a common denominator, complete equality will be enforced. . . . Only the indispensable is indispensable; henceforth that is to be the motto of the universe. But it needs shocks: we'll provide for them, we the directors. Slaves must have directors. Complete obedience, complete impersonality; occasionally, however, every thirty years or so, Shigalëv will let them have a shock, and then they will all suddenly begin to devour each other, of course only up to a certain point, for the sole purpose of preventing boredom. Boredom is an aristocratic feeling; there will be no desires under Shigalëvism. Desire and suffering for us, Shigalëvism for the slaves!" (Written in 1871.)

Extract from *The Brothers Karamazov*

The Grand Inquisitor is speaking to Christ:

" Oh, we shall convince them that they cannot be free till they renounce their freedom in our favour and submit to us. . . . Too well, all too well, will they know the value of submission once and for all! Men will be unhappy till they grasp this. . . . However, the flock will collect again and submit once more, and then it will be for ever, for ever. We will give them a quiet modest happiness, the happiness of feeble creatures such as they were created. Oh, we shall convince them at last that they have no right to be proud. . . . Yes, we will force them to work, but in their free time we will make their life like a game with songs, choruses, and innocent dances. Oh, we will even permit them to sin—for they are weak and feeble—and they will love us like children because we allow them to sin. We shall permit or forbid them to live with wives or lovers, to have or not to have children—according to whether they have been obedient or disobedient, and they will submit to us gladly and joyfully. . . . And they will all be happy, all the millions, except the hundred thousand who rule over them. For we alone, we who guard the mystery, we alone shall be unhappy. There will be thousands of millions of happy children and only a hundred thousand martyrs, who have taken on themselves the curse of the knowledge of good and evil." (Written in 1879.)

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